

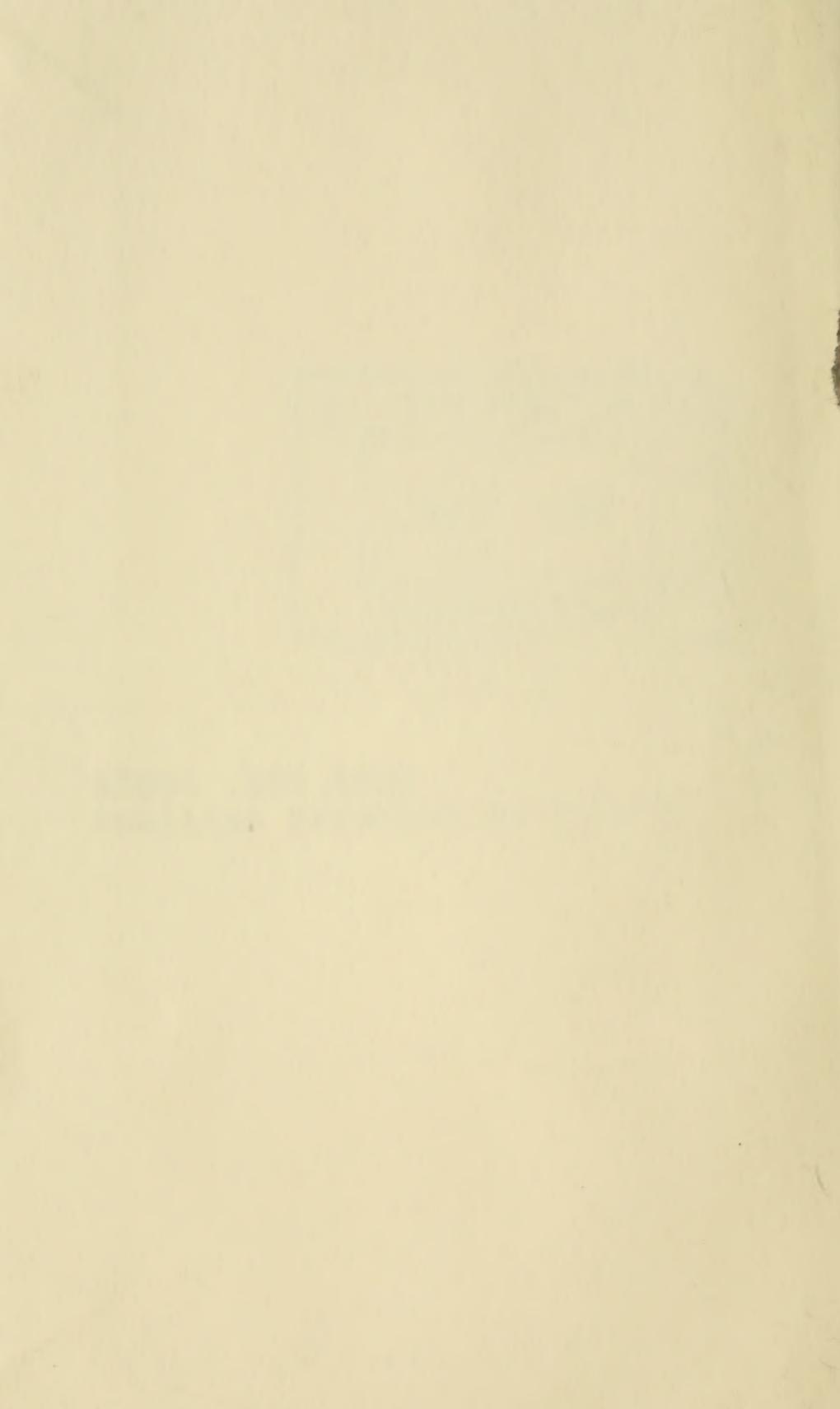
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Homilies preached at Albury.





HOMILIES

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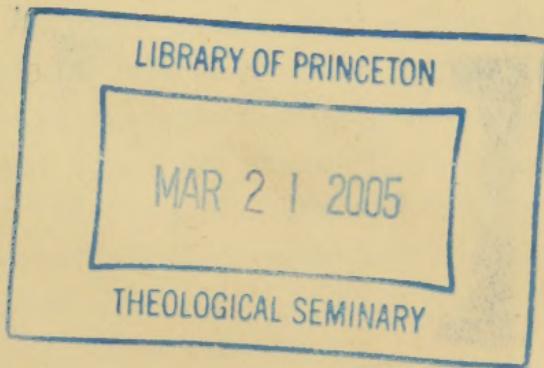
ALBURY.

HOMILIES

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1888.

HOMILIES,

PREACHED AT ALBURY.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Rom. xiii., 8; Matt. xxi., 1-13.

DEAR Brethren, The debt we are called upon to pay is the debt of Love. "Owe no man anything but to love one another." How much are we in arrear in this respect? "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is the command to us—and the demand from us. Have we obeyed? have we fulfilled? I fear that the best of us, the most loving amongst us, must put our hands upon our hearts and say, I am guilty—Lord, help Thou me. Surely none will stop at the threshold and ask, But who is my neighbour? when a *closer* tie binds man to man, a common *brotherhood*, with Jesus at the head, who is not ashamed to call us *brethren*.

Where is the remedy to be found for this shortcoming, this failure in Love? We have it in this same portion of Scripture. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." He is the only true loving Brother of all men; and the

highest proof of His love is found in this that He has given His life, a ransom for *all* ; has put Himself under the heavy burden of the sin of all, and borne it away. This was Love indeed ! wondrous Love ! on which to meditate, into which to desire to drink, should be the hourly object of our lives. This must be the substance of the exhortation, “Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ.” We become assimilated to the likeness of that on which our hearts are set. If it be on earthly things, we become earthly. If on heavenly things, we become heavenly ; if on the Lord Jesus Christ, we become like Him. He owes no man anything. He loves all men. Not that He *loved* them once, but that He loves them still, and will never cease to love. If we be asked, how we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, let us be reminded that He hath joined us to Himself, folded us in the arms of His Love, when He took us into covenant with Himself in our baptism, that He has put on us the robe of His righteousness, so clothing Himself upon us as to make Him nigh to every one of us. So that we are not so much called to do a thing ourselves, as to realize to ourselves a thing already done by Him, who hath loved us, and to abide in the faith thereof—watching lest we defile His garment and dishonour His name. And let us remember, that it is the Holy Ghost dwelling in us that can and will shed abroad this love in our hearts, we yielding ourselves to His gracious operations whose desire it ever is to work in us the mind of Christ and to conform us to His image. The flesh may and does hinder. The flesh may imitate

and strive, and it has a duty to fulfil;—but the Lord Jesus Christ can alone bring us in the obedience of faith to love one another.

I said the flesh has a duty to fulfil—it has—both positive and negative. The positive duty is to walk honestly both in small things and great. To avoid debt, lest we wrong our creditor; and in order to do this we should not indulge in anything that we have not the means to pay for. Debts are odious things, and often involve a life of misery, which an honest beginning would have averted. My young friends, “Owe no man anything.” There are many other positive duties which the flesh has to fulfil—but the special thing laid upon us on this the first day of the ecclesiastical year is the avoidance of debt; begin the year well, and it will end well.

One cannot occupy the present time in dwelling on the negative duties of the flesh, and by the flesh I mean the responsibilities of a man, a Christian man, using his reasonable faculties in order that he may rightly fulfil all duties pertaining to him in all the relations of life, whether it be husband—father—master—servant—and member of the civil society to which he belongs.

Our negative duties consist in the abstinence from everything that defileth our bodies, that corrupteth our minds—such as evil books and evil associations. From everything that pampereth the flesh—from everything that *conscience* (that faithful monitor within) warns us against. From everything that unfitteth us for private devotion—or for the public worship of God.

Let us take the warning of the Gospel and not make the house of prayer a house of merchandise, or place of vanity—but draw near to God through Jesus Christ and by the Holy Ghost—worshipping in spirit and in truth—hearing the word, and feeding on the body and blood of Christ—so let us begin the new church year waiting upon and for the Lord—crying from the heart, “Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

Rom. xiii., 8 ; Matt. xxi., 1-13.

WE were told last Lord's day that the proper attitude of mind becoming Christians at this season of the year is that of readiness to receive the coming King. And herein more is needed than the hasty evanescent feeling of enthusiasm such as is recorded in the Gospel for the day. There must be a present work, a present preparation—or the coming of the King will be unto judgment and not unto salvation. Our Lord came into the city amidst the shouts of the multitude; but His first act was to go up into the temple, and to overthrow the whole machinery by which the temple worship was carried on—and to cast out all those who were concerned in working the machinery—the sellers of birds and animals for sacrifice, and the money changers—telling them that by these very acts they had made God's house of prayer to be a den of thieves.

When the great men of the day, the chief priests and rulers asked Him by what authority He was acting, He told them, that the open reprobates were nearer to repentance, and fitter children of the coming Kingdom than themselves who professed indeed in their several ways, like the multitude whose shouts yet rung in their ears, to make their boast in God and their readiness to do His work, while in truth they refused to do that immediate work, which lay to their hand. They were rejecting God's corner-stone, and building up to heaven their own tower of Babel and means of defence. Alas ! Alas ! have ye never read in the Scriptures, true of all times and especially true of these, " The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner "?— Whosoever shall stumble at this stone shall be broken, but the day is at hand when this same stone shall fall upon the religious professors of the day and shall grind them to powder.

Yes, there must be a preparation of heart—a work to be done within—a renunciation of the world and of the flesh—a looking to God alone for help and deliverance, and until this is wrought in us, vain is it for men to profess their belief in the coming of the Lord—vain to look for His day, for to such it will be darkness, and not light.

There is at all times some special work to be done—and for the doing of it the Lord sends His messenger in His own Name. Many will at first welcome the messenger—but when they come to know the particular kind of work, it wounds their *self-glory*, it offends their preju-

dices, it calls for self-sacrifice—in one word, it requires faith in God and in Christ, faith in the unseen, faith which can trust against all outward appearances—such faith can alone recognise either the work or the workman.

The Jews thought that the Lord was about forthwith to be their King—and to raise them to earthly power—He came to die. The baptized nations have thought that God was going to convert and bring under their influence all kings and nations. The church will abide an election, a few among many, even to the end. The world shall never be converted by apostles or their fellow-labourers. It shall be converted (it is written in the Scriptures of truth) by restored Israel.

The Jews could not discern the Son of God in that poor carpenter. The world and worldly church cannot discern the Holy Ghost in these contemptible utterances, in tongues and prophesyings, and in a few weak men who go about laying on their hands on the few who will receive them. The builders, the worldly builders, the professors of worldly religion can never discern the right stone on which to build ; they stumble over it, and are broken, and at length when iniquity has come to the full it will fall on the builders and grind them to powder. And now dearly beloved, because you have had grace to discern the stone and the workman, and to say : “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord,” do not imagine that you have no work to do, lest haply after all, you stumble upon the stone. Neither let your eyes wander into the ends of the earth, when a present work

—one which comes home to every one of you—is ready to your hands. Brethren, let the chamber of your hearts be made ready for the Lord, and be you yourselves as servants who wait for Him, making haste to finish the assigned tasks.

Owe no man *anything* but *love*. How is it possible that you should enter into the marriage supper and leave behind claims unsatisfied, and debts unpaid? I speak not only of money debts—though these are not to be left out of consideration—but your debts of love and honour which you owe to every one with whom you come in contact. Your debts to your father and mother—to your wife—to your children—to your brothers and sisters—to your companions and your friends—to your poor neighbours and your rich neighbours—to your equals, your superiors, your subordinates. Have you misled any by your words or your acts? labour to reclaim them. Have you wounded any by your pride? Heal the wound by your meekness and gentleness. Behold your King cometh meek and lowly. Have you estranged any by injury, or even by unkindness? Win them back without delay—be reconciled to your brother before you are both alike summoned into the presence of the Judge, your common Master. Above all, O church of the living God, remember your debt of love to your loving Spouse, and how you have departed from His love. Awake, arise, before it be too late. Hearken to His words of love which have been read in the services of the church during this last week of preparation, and return to Him; return, return O Shulamite—Salome,

bride of Solomon-Salem—Jerusalem from above, and put on thy jewels—return, that thy Spouse may look upon thee—for He desires to see in thee the company of two armies—the host whom He will wake up from their sleep, and the host of the living ones, prepared and perfected.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Rom. xv., 4-13; Luke xxi., 25-33.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ is set before us as the bright example which we are to follow if we would please God the Father, and have with us the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost. The whole history of our Lord from its origin to its close, is that of denying Himself for the good of others. "Christ pleased not Himself." The apostle in this Epistle exhorts us "to be like-minded, one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that we may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This principle of self-denial for the good of others, runs directly contrary to the natural propensities of man. From infancy, through childhood and manhood, we see nature working in this direction—a seeking to please oneself. But is it confined to the natural man? Does not a good deal of our religion take the same direction?—a selfish pleasing of ourselves. If we will scrutinize our thoughts and ways, there is reason to fear the result would be, that self preponderates over that catholic spirit of love to man and love to our Christian brethren, which latter should prevail and lead us to that continual self-denial

for the good of others, of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the bright example.

Has God given to us as a people, or to any amongst us, strength? It is not that we should bear down upon the weak, but that we should "bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." There can be no question, but that as a portion of the Christian church, we are favoured above our brethren; wherefore are we so blest? that we should be instrumental in blessing others for their good to edification. This cannot be by exalting but by humbling ourselves; by seeking to have the mind of Christ who for our sakes, "though He was rich, became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich." Jesus put Himself under the burden of Jew and Gentile. He became a Minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and confessed God among the Gentiles, that they might glorify God for His mercy. He died for the redemption of the world at large, and for this cause shall He reign over all; the root of Jesse shall rise to reign over Jew and Gentile. May the Lord work in us that mind of Christ, which shall enable us, as a church, to walk humbly with our brethren under every provocation, whether of silent contempt or open persecution; and in our daily walk as individual members of the body, in our families, in the social circle, in our intercourse with the world at large, to avoid provocation, and deny ourselves for the good of others. What higher motive can be presented than the example of Christ? but that may be strengthened and confirmed by the

prospect we have, of soon meeting the Lord face to face—we do not believe that the Lord is mocking or deceiving us in the many assurances given us, that His coming is very near, and that it is a rational hope and expectation, that we who are now living upon the earth may have the blessed privilege of beholding His return.

In addition to His word, and to what the Lord is doing to prepare a living body for His presence, many Scripture signs are coming to pass—which, the word says, “when ye see, know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.” Among them I would notice a sign universally prevailing, *i.e.* “Distress of nations with perplexity.” I believe our attention should be chiefly directed to Christendom, as that part of the world with which the Lord will wind up His account first. And are they, the kingdoms, not all troubled and perplexed, looking with apprehension for the things that are coming, and arming to the very teeth in preparation for war? Be assured of this, that the delusive thought that the devices of men will ameliorate the condition of the world, is vain. Things will get worse and worse as we near the end. Then what is the word to those who fear God, and put not their trust in man, “When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.”

Take this word of comfort to yourselves, while you are walking as Christ walked—cleave to Him with all your heart and soul—let Him have all His way with you, that He may use you for His glory.

Feed on Him with a living faith, and let it be manifest to all, that Christ dwelleth in you, and that you live by the faith of the Son of God.

Rom. xv., 4-13; Luke xxi., 25-33.

IT is entirely dependent on the condition and state in which men are, whether the coming of the Lord Jesus a second time should be to them a subject of hope, a matter of rejoicing, a ground of consolation, or one of little importance, if not of alarm and disquietude.

There is no doubt that the coming of the Lord a second time is to *judge* the world—and “judgment beginneth at the house of God.” There is no doubt that as the first, so the second coming of the Lord is to be ushered in and accompanied by fearful and striking events—by the disturbance of the frame-work of society—by the upheavings and uprootings of all order and arrangements, and culminate, come to a head, in the very disturbance of the laws and order and form, which God has given to the works of His own hand.

Yet, this very disturbance of natural order and form—this upheaving and uprising, terrible in itself, most evil in itself, and fraught with results appalling and disastrous, have in them grounds of consolation and comfort to those, who are lifted up out of dependence on external, sensible, and earthly conditions.

The Gospel tells of that day with all its accompanying woes and fears—tells of “men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth;” and yet, tells us when these things begin to come to pass, “then to look up and lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh.”

There must be a manifest and entire difference of condition between those, to whom the same awful events are the cause of fear and terror, and those to whom the same events are the harbingers of approaching deliverance and blessedness.

Now there are two points alluded to (incidentally as it were) in the Epistle and Gospel of the day, which give the key and explanation as to the root and cause of this difference. In the Gospel the point is this—“know ye the kingdom of God is at hand, when ye see these things come to pass.” It is the expectation of, the waiting for, the kingdom—it is the seeing its approach that puts a new character, a totally different aspect on the events of the day, on the history of the world. He who is waiting for the coming in of the kingdom, looks at things, at the changes and events of human society, and of daily life from a totally different point of view from him who has no such hope, no such expectation. “Receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved,” we have grace to serve God acceptably, and to see without regret, without that *looking back of the heart*, that clinging to the things that are and from which nothing else can deliver—and be content to see everything failing, everything moved

that can be moved—the passing away of all that is of the earth.

Then again, it is the rising into the calling, to which the Church as the one body is called.

It is the body of Christ, and that alone, that stands out whole and perfect from amidst the breaking up and utter desolation that overtakes and consumes everything created. Heaven and earth pass away, but the one body, with one mouth, with one heart, with one joy, abounds in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Thoughts of self, thoughts for self, separate, enfeeble, depress. The unity of the one faith, one hope, one mouth, one heart, this is strength, and joy, and exaltation, and lifting up of head, and lifting up of hands, and lifting up of heart, songs of deliverance in the darkness of night.

In the Epistle the apostle to the Gentiles calls on the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy. This is the especial work of the Gentile apostleship, to call, or recall the church to the knowledge or remembrance of her oneness in Christ, and to pray that the God of patience, and the God of consolation, and the God of hope may grant such oneness of heart, such oneness of mind, such joy and peace in believing, that she may abound in hope—the hope that maketh not ashamed—the hope that entereth within the veil—the hope that purifieth—even the blessed and glorious hope of the coming of our Lord Jesus, and of our gathering unto Him.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

1 Cor. iv., 1-5; Matt. xi., 2-10.

THE subject brought before us in the Epistle and Gospel of the day is that of the *ministry*; its nature, its responsibility, and its connexion with the re-appearing of the Lord. In the Epistle, the apostle, seeking to deliver the church from that erroneous but ever common tendency to have regard to men, from that carnal looking to the instrument, and saying, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos—says, “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.” Here is the remedy for the evil. He says, you are carnal, you walk as men, for you say, “I am of Paul, I of Apollos.” Do you *really* with all your boasted regard and preference for us, do you know what we are? You do not; for if you did, you could not say, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos.” Well, I will tell you; we are *ministers*, literally, we are *under-rowers* of Christ—we are at His command, not yours; He guides; He commands the vessel, not we; we labour and row under Him; He by us guides, and steers the vessel, the church. Cease then from your worship of, and preference of man. All such preference is nothing less

than *detruding* Christ from His place. Again, we are “stewards of the mysteries of God.” We have to arrange and set in order the mysteries of the house of God. That is our business. Therefore cease from man-worship, and cease from judging. Our work is not to be judged by you, or in man’s day (in the original), but in the Lord’s day, and by the Lord. You are in the vessel of which Jesus, the Captain of your salvation, is the Owner, Lord, and Guide. *Do not* have your eyes upon the under-rowers; look at *Him*, and look for a haven. Again, you are in God’s house, you are God’s household. *Do not* be thinking of the *stewards* of the house, but see, and taste of the provisions, the spiritual food they bring you from Him, the Lord of the house. *Do not* worship *them*, *do not* put yourselves under the headship of this one or that one, *do not* judge them; but hear, receive, and be guided by the Lord through them. You *cannot* bring yourself into the haven of rest. You *cannot* feed yourself. God alone can do it, but God will *not* guide you, except by them; nor will God give out His heavenly and ineffable food but through their hands. Oh, why has the Church been so tossed and troubled on the sea? because the hands of her *rowers* have been weakened by men saying, “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos.” Why have the provisions in God’s house been so scantily measured out, and little fed on? Because men have thought to get at the food themselves, and not through the *stewards* of the house. Such is the lesson of the Epistle. In the Gospel we are reminded of Him who came “to prepare the way of the

Lord"—of him, than whom among those born of women none were greater ; but of whom it was said, "the least in the kingdom of the heavens (the church) is greater." Of the earthly condition no prophet but John heralded in the Incarnate Son of God, but the smallest in the kingdom of the heavens is a member of the risen and ascended Lord. Now, what John did as regards the Incarnate, the Son of God made man, the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God have to do in regard to the Risen, Ascended Lord. What is that ? To prepare and make ready His way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just ; and how are they to do this ? By unfolding and ministering the mysteries of God, the mysteries of His word, the mysteries of His sacraments ; by ministering from Him unseen, yet present, the unseen, invisible food, to the unseen, invisible life in the mystical body of the Christ. This is the work of the ministry ; this is what He now, in an especial manner, seeks to do in all its meaning, when man's day is near its close, and the Lord's own day is about to dawn. Why does God raise up again apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors ? Because He would have His way prepared : the hearts of the disobedient ones turned to Him, that He may come in. By One He has prevailed and does prevail to save souls ; by four He prepares and perfects ; by four He brings the church into her desired haven, the kingdom. By four He gives forth the mysteries of the kingdom. Let your hearts rejoice in this. Let Him prepare you for the grace that is to be brought out at the appearing of Jesus

Christ. Commit yourselves to His care and keeping, which He gives you through those whom He places to guide, to rule, to bless in His Name. And now draw near to His table, and with joyful hearts, in full assurance of faith, and with purposes of entire devotedness to Him, receive in the communion of the one body the bread of everlasting life and the cup of salvation, looking for and hasting unto *the day*, when the Master of the house shall come in, and we shall sit down with Him for ever and ever.

1 Cor. iv., 1-5; Matt. xi., 2-10.

THE Gospel for this day asserts the true standing of the apostles towards the churches under them, and the people committed to their care. They are ministers of God, and stewards of the mysteries of Christ —of whom it is expected (as of earthly stewards) that they should be found faithful; but at the same time they are not to be judged by man's day, by the present time; their works and doings are not to be measured by any human judgment, they may not attempt to form a judgment concerning it themselves. The Lord alone will judge them, and that not in the present dispensation, but at the time of His second coming.

The history of the apostle Paul, of his works and labours, and of the fruits of those works, affords a most

instructive comment upon the words of the Epistle. How often does he speak of the hindrances which lay in his way, preventing him from carrying out those plans, which, according to the light vouchsafed to him, he had purposed to carry out. How earnestly does he press upon the churches to strive with him in prayer to God, that he may be delivered from those who do not believe, and may have the way opened to come to them. His second Epistle to Timothy is full of earnest exhortation to him to persevere, to contend for the truth, to endure unto the end, continuing in the things which he had learned, mixed with intimations of the apparent want of success which had accompanied his own labours. "This thou knowest," he says, "that all in Asia are turned away from me." In the last days perilous times shall come, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, will resist the truth, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses; preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine. And yet he says of himself, "I have fought a good fight—I have kept the faith—I have finished my course. At my first answer no man stood by me, but the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion, and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom." According to human judgment, does not this seem very like a failure on his part to fulfil the duty which he announced as being committed to him, of ministering the Gospel of God, whereby the Gentiles might be made obedient in word

and deed, of presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus—of presenting them as a chaste virgin to Christ? “I judge not myself, yet am I not hereby justified, but He that judgeth me is the Lord,” and in this confidence, at the close of his ministry, as one who had found grace to be faithful, he rejoices in the hope of receiving the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge would give to him, and not to him only, but to all those who love His appearing.

But though Paul did not carry out his work, and though we find nothing definite in his writings concerning the calling forth of others to fulfil what he failed to carry out, yet we find that the apostles are ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. And through apostles the Gospel of Christ, the fulness of the Holy Ghost, must be ministered; through apostles the mysteries of God must be declared and made known: and for this end there is needed faith on the part both of those who minister, and of those who are ministered to. The commission of apostles, whenever the Lord calls forth men upon whom the name of apostle is set, is nothing less than this, to minister the fulness of Christ, to act as good stewards, making known to the church, and carrying into fulfilment in her, the mysteries of God, labouring to bring into manifestation the great mystery of godliness.

When our Lord was commissioning the twelve (Matt. x.) He said, “He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet’s reward; he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous

man, shall receive a righteous man's reward ; a cup of cold water given unto one of these little ones *in the name of a disciple* shall not go unrewarded." These then are distinct measures of reward to those who receive a prophet, a righteous man, one of the least of the little ones who believe in Christ, in the name of a prophet, a righteous man, or a disciple, for all these names have reference to God and Christ. But the receiving an apostle stands on a different footing. "He who receiveth you, receiveth Me, and He who receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." "Our fellowship," says the apostle John, "is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ," and this fellowship we have to communicate to you.

All these things are matters of faith, not of sight ; they are not things that can be proved to the understanding, that can be made clear to the intellect, that can be explained or comprehended by any process of human reasoning. The things of the Spirit of God are spiritually discerned, and we have received the Spirit of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God. Everything connected with the ministry of Christ, is a mystery received by faith, comprehended in the spirit, revealed in our spirits by the Spirit of God, whom we have received. Baptism, our standing in baptism, the new life which therein we have received, in the power of which we keep the body dead, the old man crucified with Christ, and in virtue of which we count ourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God, is a mystery ; and the ministration of this mystery was committed to the

apostles. The Lord's supper is a mystery, committed in a like manner to the apostles. The gift of the Holy Ghost is also a mystery committed to the apostles, ministered by them in virtue of their authority as ministers of Christ. The new life in baptism, the food of eternal life in the holy eucharist, the eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ; the receiving the Holy Ghost by laying on of hands, are all beyond the region of the intellect—not by reason, not by any human powers, but by the Holy Ghost whom we have received, do we know the things that are freely given to us of God. In the absence of apostles all these mysteries have been either misprized or exaggerated; unduly exalted, or unduly depreciated, set up to the exclusion of other no less important truths, or set aside as of little or no value.

When God restores apostles, when the name of apostle is again set upon men, and the Lord gives faith to those who are His disciples, to receive them in His name, then the results should follow which He has proclaimed. "He who receiveth you receiveth Me." Then the fulness of Christ, the fulness of Him who is the Anointer with the Holy Ghost, should flow forth. The mysteries of the Gospel of Christ should be manifested, the things new and old should be brought out, all things should find their place and their due relative value and importance, and the full mystery of godliness should be revealed. After long centuries of standing still, in the absence of the first ministry in the church, the things which could not be revealed at first, should now be brought to light, and the church having tasted again the

powers of the world to come, having been again made partaker of the Holy Ghost, should go on to perfection.

There is one mystery not yet revealed. One part of the mystery of the Gospel remains to be made known. It is the mystery of the resurrection, of the change of the body, whether through death or without seeing death. "Behold I show you a mystery," says the apostle, "we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the Lord shall descend from heaven, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

This is the great mystery which by the ministry of apostles must be brought about, for they are the stewards of the mysteries of God, and we look for this change, because the ministry of apostles is restored.

The present time of Advent is especially the time, when our thoughts should be directed to the resurrection and change, which is our hope. We should meditate on it continually, and so meditate on it, that it may become not a mere formula, not a mere theory, but an object of earnest longing and desire, of daily expectation. We should so meditate on it, that we may be fully prepared, so that that day come not upon us at unawares, which shall come as a snare upon all the dwellers upon earth. We should so meditate on it, that we may respond to the cry of the Spirit, and cry out continually, "Come Lord Jesus, even so come quickly."

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

Phil. iv., 4-7; John. i., 19-28.

REJOICE in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice. This is the constant attitude wherein the Christian should be; an attitude bespeaking at once confidence towards God, and a power over the things of this life enabling him to triumph over all those manifold changes and chances to which we, in common with all mankind, are exposed.

Peter, in his first general Epistle, blesses "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath begotten us again to a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, who are kept by the power of God unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last day, wherein ye greatly rejoice though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." This rejoicing is no fruit of earthly happiness, no result of immunity from the trials and tribulations to which we are exposed in this world; it is a rejoicing that rises above all mundane affairs, that sets them in their true light, as transitory, but for a moment, in comparison with the weight of glory which is set before those who in the midst of manifold temptations, are able

to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Rejoice alway, and again I say, Rejoice. The joy of the Lord is your strength ; that spiritual joy which rises triumphant over all the obstacles which are in the way of the Christian's progress—let nothing interfere with that joy. The first and last word, as it were, is Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. Here is another distinguishing characteristic of the true Christian ; be gentle, yielding, stand not too strictly upon your rights, be not too exacting ; aim not at high things. This world passeth away, and the fashion of it, and that which should distinguish us who look for that better heavenly inheritance is moderation ; the power of moderating our demands and expectations, the power of limiting our desires. This should be apparent to all men. Self-seeking, self-aggrandizement are the traits by which the men of the world are distinguished ; self-denial, a yielding gentle spirit should distinguish those who look for the coming of the Lord, and wait for his appearing. The Lord is at hand. This is the consolation to us ; this is the ground of our rejoicing ; of our moderation, and of freedom from carefulness. Be careful for nothing. In the parable of the sower the last causes which hindered the growth and ripening of the seed were the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches ; these things entering in, choke the word and render it unfruitful. Cares and riches are here mentioned as being correlatives, as being necessarily connected together. “ If riches increase,” says the Psalmist, “ set not your heart upon them ;” “ Riches,” says the wise man, “ certainly

themselves wings ; they fly away." St. Paul writes to Timothy, " Having food and raiment let us be therewith content, for they that *will* be rich, that set themselves to obtain riches, fall into a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." The freedom from carefulness enjoined upon us by the apostle is the result of confidence in God who supplieth all our need, it is the result of that hope which he had just referred to when he said the Lord is at hand. Such a course of conduct runs counter to all our views as far as this world is concerned; worldly wisdom and prudence lead us to provide for the future, to leave nothing to chance, and if we had only hope in this life we could not act otherwise, but the confidence we have in putting away carefulness is the result of our assurance, that the Lord is at hand. We have our requirements so long as we are in this world, as men of the world, having families and households and duties to others as well as to ourselves, we are not without cause for thoughtfulness and anxiety, but the way to meet them is in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make our requests known unto God. Instead of burdening ourselves with anxiety and carefulness, we are here invited to make our requests known unto God in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving—thanksgiving for that which God has given to us, for He who hath given to us His Son, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things, and prayer and supplication wherein we make our requests known unto God. It is a great short-

coming, this failing to come to God to make our requests known unto Him in everything. In this same epistle the apostle closes his exhortation with the words, " My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"—and He knoweth that we have need of the things pertaining to this life, and will not leave us without an answer to our requests brought before Him by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. We are not, and may not expect to be free from cares and anxieties, free from wants and necessities, but in all these things our refuge is in Him who will supply all our need. Finally comes the promise to those thus doing—the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Peace was the farewell of our Lord to his disciples, " Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Peace was the greeting with which after His resurrection He saluted His disciples, who were borne down with sorrow at His departure. It is not the peace of this world depending upon outward circumstances ; it is the peace of God which passeth understanding—it is a peace which keepeth the hearts and minds, hallowing, as it were, our feelings and affections, soothing our thoughts and imaginations, moderating our cares and anxieties ; it is a peace which we have through Christ and in Him ; a peace which we cannot describe in words nor compass with the understanding—it is the peace of the Lord. Now, dearly beloved, let us take these words of the apostle to ourselves, let us meditate upon them,

let us conform ourselves to them, let us fashion ourselves according to them ; let it be seen in this holy feast, this our offering of thanksgiving, while approaching to the altar and table of the Lord ; let us rejoice in Him, let us cast away all care, let us make our wants and requests known with thanksgiving, then shall we realize the peace of God through Jesus Christ, and shall be enabled to wait for His appearing in the assurance that God will in that day supply all our poverty according to His riches in glory through Christ Jesus.

Phil. iv., 4. John i., 19-28.

THE Lord at His first coming sent forth His messenger to prepare His way before Him. Now, also before His second coming He sends forth His ministers, the stewards of the mysteries of God, to prepare and make ready His way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that when He shall come to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in His sight. Inasmuch then as His ministers are His fore-runners, they have a mission given to them like unto that committed to John the Baptist, differing, however, because the circumstances are different. But inasmuch as they are also the stewards of God's mysteries, they have so far an additional as well as a distinct and different work to do, and an additional

as well as a distinct and different word of testimony. As messengers and fore-runners of the Lord, and heralds of His approach, they are, as was John, "A voice crying in the wilderness," not indeed in the wilderness of Judea, but in that spiritual wilderness into which Satan has prevailed to drive out the woman, the visible church. They cry unto her as did John to his countrymen: make straight the crooked ways, make the rough places plain. The humble and meek, the hidden saints concealed among the multitude of those, who profess Christianity, but deny its power, must be exalted, the pride of this world in the high places of the church must be made low. Repent, they cry, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Be grieved, and mourn, and weep because the heavenly laws have been transgressed, the ordinances of the Holy Ghost have been changed, the everlasting covenant made by God with His Son, raised from the dead and exalted, and filled with the Holy Ghost, hath been broken. Repent, for the Lord is at hand, yea, He stands in the midst of you even now, present by the Holy Ghost. Ye know Him not, alas ! ye know Him not, though ye have been baptized into Him, even now He is in the midst of you, stretching forth His hands and longing to baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, that so ye may be espoused and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband—ready to meet the Bridegroom when He shall come visibly in His own glory, and in the glory of the holy angels. So far the testimony borne by the ministers of Christ sent forth by Him to prepare His way, is like unto that borne by

John. It is like, although even thus far it differs. John proclaimed the advent of the Lord when He came to suffer and to die; now Christ's ministers proclaim the advent of the Lord coming to save His elect, and to receive His kingdom. John called to repentance because of a broken law, given with the voice of thunder and with flames of fire from mount Sinai, because of changed ordinances which, however higher than any given before, were yet types and fore-shadowings of heavenly ordinances, afterwards to be bestowed, a broken covenant, which contained in it the promise of an *earthly* inheritance, the sure gage indeed of the heavenly inheritance, but not the very image and substance. We confess, and call upon our brethren to confess, the breach of heavenly laws, heavenly ordinances, a covenant ensuring and conferring the first-fruits of a heavenly Inheritance. John preached and administered the baptism of repentance: we confess the apostacy of God's people from the standing of *Christian* baptism, baptism into the *body of Christ*. So far even where our testimony is like unto that given by John, it is different and distinct; but now Christ's ministers are entrusted with an additional and higher testimony. They have committed to them not only a word of warning, but a word of consolation and blessing and of great joy in the Holy Ghost. There are those, who have heard the words of warning and the call to repentance, and they have repented; who have found Christ standing in the midst of them, and have received from Him the sealing and anointing of the Holy Ghost, the earnest of the coming

kingdom, our promised inheritance in the heavens. And to them the ministers of Christ, the stewards of the mysteries of God, have this further word to speak, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again we say, Rejoice." The Lord is at hand. Oh ye that are wearied and perplexed with the conflicts ye endure, whether in the affairs of the church, or of the world, be careful for nothing. Ye that are in affliction and suffering, whether in body or in soul, ye that are in need, ye that are bereaved or threatened with bereavement, make known to your heavenly Father the sorrows of your hearts, and the things that ye would ask. Do it even with joy, whether your spirits be poured forth in supplications and desires beyond the power of words, or your mouths be opened in prayer to express the things you need; let gratitude be in your hearts and thanksgiving be mingled with the offerings of your lips. For Jesus gives to you His peace, the peace of God the Father received into His heart, and over-flowing into your hearts, oh ye that are the members of His mystical body—the peace which passeth understanding, and lifts you up above all the sorrows that ye know and feel—the peace which binds and keeps you safe in Christ Jesus our Lord—the peace which is the communion with the Father and the Son. Such is the last message of Christ to us before we keep the feast of His holy birth.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

Titus ii., 11-14 ; John iii., 13-19.

“ **A**S Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” What is this lifting up of the Son of man? Is it fulfilled in His being nailed to the cross? The death of Christ on the cross is the fulfilling of the curse, it is the carrying out of the extreme sentence of the righteous God upon the sin of man, whereby death came into the world. It is the proof of that utter, hopeless condemnation and judgment to which the whole human race had been exposed in Adam. When the righteous, holy One died, then the foundations were indeed destroyed, then the earth and its inhabitants were dissolved. The death of Christ upon the cross took place in the midst of the universal, supernatural darkness about the ninth hour, when Jesus cried out, “ It is finished,” and bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. In this act He made an end of transgression; He bore the sins of the world, that sin might be put away for ever; He suffered, the just for the unjust, that He might be the justifier of them that believe. When

the Jews, with wicked hands, had taken Him and slain Him, then God gave Him a new life, even length of days, for ever and ever, and exalted Him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. When they had slain the Prince of life, then God raised Him up, and set Him at His own right hand, that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He came, indeed, to suffer, and to die, but He came also to live and reign for ever. He was the fountain of life, the healer of all our ills, the conqueror of death, the deliverer of the captives from the prison-house, the opener of the eyes of the blind, the dayspring from on high, shining in upon those who sat in darkness and the shadow of death, the light to lighten the Gentiles, and set for salvation to the ends of the earth. All this is contained in the lifting up of the Son of man, and we celebrate Him, who has been thus exalted, in our anthem of praise during the eight days before Christmas, invoking Him as the Wisdom of God, the Captain of the house of Israel, the Root of Jesse, the Key of David, the Brightness of eternal light, the King of the Gentiles, the Emmanuel, the Law-giver and King, the Expectation and Desire of the nations, the Shepherd of Israel whose goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting. This is His work, for this end He was born, for this He came into the world, for this He was raised from the dead, and is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is thus lifted up to give eternal life to all who believe on His Name, and He has

wrought out this salvation for all who believe. As the Gospel directs us to the Son of man lifted up for our salvation, so the Epistle directs our attention to the way in which we should walk, speak, and act, who are heirs of this great salvation, pointing us still to Him who hath thus been lifted up, as our example. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age, or dispensation. The appearing of this healing, saving grace of God is seen in Him, who came and manifested forth the glory of the only begotten of the Father, who dwelt among us,—God manifest in flesh, full of grace and truth, who did the works of God, who spake as never man spake, who caused to shine into the world the very light of God, who brought life and immortality to light. Looking to Him as our example, we learn to deny ungodliness, to live like God, to conform ourselves to Him in whose image we were created, to put away worldly longings and desires, to renounce the world in the hope of a better resurrection, to walk as the children of light, to walk soberly, estimating at their true worth the things of this life, and stretching forward to that condition of things which are yet to be revealed, having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but conforming ourselves to the righteousness of God, holding forth the word of life, and thus adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Such are the thoughts suggested by the scriptures

selected for the Epistle and Gospel for this day, and our duty is plain. We have been enlightened to see in Him, whose birth we are about to celebrate, the Emmanuel.

We are recalled on each occasion of the recurrence of this blessed festival to the true character of Him, who thus appeared in great humility, who, veiling for a time the glory and majesty of His eternal God-head, took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

We confess Him as Lord and Christ : we worship Him as the Maker of heaven and earth, as the Heir of creation, we believe on Him that we may receive eternal life. But let us not stop short. His lifting up hath not yet been fully manifested. He must be lifted up, that all men may acknowledge Him and confess His Name, for God hath exalted Him, and given Him a Name that is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord and Christ to the glory of God the Father. This also shall be accomplished ; it shall be accomplished through our faith, through our witness. In our walk in this present world wherein we live soberly, righteously, and godly, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, we bear witness. In our cry, " Come, Lord Jesus," we bear witness ; in our holy worship, we bear witness. We bear witness as a people, whom the Lord has purified unto Himself, zealous of

good works ; and as God is now glorified in us through Christ, He shall glorify us with Himself in the day when He shall come to be glorified in all them that believe, and to bring salvation to the ends of the earth.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

Heb. i., 1-12; John i., 1-14.

REAT is the mystery of godliness. God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. The whole mystery of godliness must be present to our thoughts this day, when we commemorate in the holy eucharist, the birth of Him whose name is Jesus, who saveth His people from their sins, who shall be called Emmanuel, God with us. We cannot separate Him, who was conceived in the Virgin's womb, from Him whose goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting. We cannot separate the new-born Infant coming into the world with that feeble cry expressive of utter helplessness, from the Eternal Word, which in the beginning was with God, and was God, who spake, and all things were created, who commanded, and they stood fast. We cannot separate the naked Babe born at Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, from the Risen, Exalted One invested with all the glorious majesty of His own, almighty, eternal, incomprehensible Godhead. We cannot separate the Son of the blessed virgin Mary

from the only-begotten Son of God, one with the Father, and with the Holy Ghost, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, who in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands, who upholdeth all things by the word of His power, who is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high, the brightness of the glory, the express image of the person of the invisible God. Oh, the ineffable, unfathomable mystery of godliness!—God manifest in the flesh. At His appearing in this world all the angels of God worshipped Him. The morning stars sang for joy. At His birth the angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks in the fields, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and the angel proclaimed the good tidings of great joy to all people, that He was born, the Saviour, the Anointed, the Ruler and King Jesus, which is Christ the Lord, and at this announcement the multitude of the heavenly host was heard with the angel singing “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.” At His birth a star appeared in the far distant east, at whose appearing wise men assembled together, and following the leading of the star, they came and worshipped Him who was born King of the Jews, and they laid at his feet their offerings—gold, frankincense, and myrrh—figures of that which shall be when all is fulfilled, figures of the time when truth and righteousness shall be established for ever, when prayer shall be made for Him continually, and He shall be daily praised; when He shall come with clouds, and every eye shall see

Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Such are the thoughts that crowd upon us during the holy service of this day, and having these thoughts in our hearts we give them words with our lips, our bodies are bowed down in lowly adoration, and our spirits are lifted up unto Him, who is seated at the right hand of God, in thankful anticipation of the glory to be revealed, and we remember those last words of David the son of Jesse, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who only doeth wondrous things, and blessed be His glorious Name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with His glory, Amen and Amen.” While the birth of the Emmanuel calls forth from us these high thoughts, these joyful anticipations, these inexpressible longings and desires, there are other thoughts connected with the great event, which we this day celebrate, which may not be put away. Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, He whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. He hath come down to visit us in great humility. He who was in the form of God, hath taken on him the form of a servant; He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, has been made in the likeness of men; He that was Jehovah’s Fellow, is become a child of Adam. The form of God, the glory, the dignity, the majesty, all that savours of God is exchanged for a creature form, for a body made of the dust, a tabernacle of flesh; a frame exposed to weakness and faintness, to hunger and thirst, to scourging and smiting, to sorrow exceeding all human

sorrow, sorrow even unto death. The Almighty One has shrouded Himself in helpless weakness; the Eternal One has subjected Himself to vanity and emptiness; He who filleth all things, has let Himself down to the measure of the finite; the Word, which in the beginning was with God, and was God, is made flesh and dwells among us. The unfolding of the mystery of godliness has many stages which will present themselves to us in their seasons. In celebrating His death we learn the duty, the value of self-sacrifice; we learn how to die unto sin. In commemorating His resurrection we are taught what is the working of that mighty power, which God wrought in Christ when he raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand, which power now worketh in our mortal bodies. His ascension to glory when He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, fills us with anticipations of our future glorious destiny, when we, we who have suffered with Him, shall also be glorified together with Him. But on this day, we learn from Him that first lesson, the lesson of humility. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, yet made Himself of no reputation, and took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Let us learn humility from Him; let us humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. Humble yourselves as He did; He became flesh, He took part

with the suffering creation, He hid not Himself from His own flesh, He bore our weaknesses, He carried our sorrows, He bore the contradiction of sinners against Himself, He made Himself of no reputation ; He emptied Himself. Let this mind be also in you which was in Christ Jesus. The present time of year is the season for showing acts of benevolence, for interchange of friendliness towards equals, and of condescension to those beneath us. Let us not in outward act alone thus observe the time, but let us have the very mind of Christ, putting away high thoughts, working out our salvation with fear and trembling, showing ourselves blameless and harmless, the sons of God in the midst of a perverse generation, shining as lights in the world. In this spirit let us bring up our offering of thanksgiving and praise for the birth of Him, whose name is Emmanuel, God with us.

OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS.

Heb. i., 1-12; John i., 1-14.

THE Gospel for the day of the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ taken from the Gospel by St. John, and the Epistle for the same holy day taken from the Epistle to the Hebrews show forth, as it were, the passing on of the first creation unto that second creation which was in the mind and according to the final purpose of God when, as we read in Genesis, "God in six days created the heaven and the earth," and on the last of these six days, as the crowning act in summing up and completing of all that had gone before, He said, "Let us make man in our image after our likeness, and let him have dominion."

This purpose of God was evidently not brought into manifestation in the work of those six days of which we read in Genesis; that rest of the Sabbath of which it is written, "and God rested on the seventh day and sanctified it," was clearly not the perfect rest, which was in His mind in regard to the works of creation, when the heavens and the earth and all the host of them were called into being; neither was the purpose of God in regard to man then brought out as expressed in the words, "let him have

dominion." Our Lord Himself says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The words in Genesis, "In the beginning" must be read in the light of, and as it were in subordination to, those same words taken up by the apostle John, who in the commencement of his Gospel uses those words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was Life." These words of divine inspiration proclaim mysteries passing infinitely beyond the mysteries of that creation of the visible heavens and earth described in Genesis, passing infinitely beyond them in regard to the past eternity, and also in regard to that future eternity in which the fulness of God's power and goodness and majesty, and glory, shall be increasingly manifested and developed, and man in the image and likeness of God shall be seen in Christ Jesus, in Him who saith, "Behold, I make all things new." This will be at once seen when we set side by side the two accounts. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God; by Him all things were made, and without Him was not anything made that was made." He, the WORD, who was with God, and who was God, must have a far higher beginning, than those things which were created by Him. Not only is He the creator of all things according to the mind and purpose of the Father, but He is Himself the beginning of the creation of God, and this is true not only in regard to His

being, as at this season, born into the world, but in regard to the purpose of God concerning Him, as we read in the Colossians, “ He is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of every creature; for by Him were all things created, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist; and He is the Head of the Body, the Church, who is the beginning, the First-born from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.” If Adam had been the source of our life, then his sin would have involved our eternal ruin, but in Him, the Word of God, in Him, the Eternal Son, who breathed into Adam’s nostrils the breath of life, who took our nature upon Him, in Him was life and thus even death, the penalty of sin, could not touch that life which was in Him. He, taking our nature, voluntarily incurred the penalty of our sin, and became a curse for us, though He was Himself without sin; in order that He might redeem us from death, and again impart to us life, in a new and higher form, a new life, that life out of death which shall never again be forfeited.

St. John in his first Epistle, refers also to this; “ We declare unto you that, which was from the beginning, which we have heard and seen and handled of the Word of Life, for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” Such then is the true spiritual understanding of the words of the Gospel concerning the Incarnate Word, the Word made flesh. God, the Creator of all things, takes upon Himself as at this season, the creature form and nature in order there-

in to suffer and to die, and afterwards to be worshipped and glorified, for He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, which was, and which is, and which is to come, the Almighty, the Emmanuel, God with us. Our meditation on this great act of God in bringing His only begotten Son into the world, cannot fail, if undertaken in a right spirit, to produce in our spirits that holy fear and reverence, that love to God, that devout adoration, which inspired the holy men and women of old, to whom the true character of the virgin's Son was revealed by the Holy Ghost, and who were ready to depart in peace, having seen the salvation of God, having seen and handled Him, who though in the form of a weak, new-born babe was to be the Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of the Israel of God. There were some godly men and women at Jerusalem, who waited for the consolation of Israel, who by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, rejoiced at the birth of the virgin's Son, and recognized Him as the Lord's Christ, and were ready to depart in peace, having seen the salvation of God, but we in contemplating the adorable mystery of the incarnation are not thereby led to think of our departing in peace as the end set before us. We look for His coming again, we look for His being manifested, coming forth from His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on High, to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, and to receive the adoration and worship of all the angels of God, and all created beings.

St. Paul in the Epistle to the Philippians describes the

irst coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death. In the Epistle for the day He is presented to us as the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person, who, after He had by Himself purged our sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

In celebrating the blessed festival of the nativity of our Lord, and in meditating on His great condescension and humility, we learn the lesson of humility which becomes us when drawing near to God in this holy eucharistic service, and we are encouraged to follow in His footsteps, who loved righteousness and hated iniquity, and who has now inherited the throne of glory. The Captain of our salvation, in bringing many sons unto glory, was made perfect through sufferings. Let us learn to suffer with Him, that we may be exalted together with Him when He comes in His kingdom. Let us now meditate on His first coming in great humility, that we may be ready to meet Him at His second coming in majesty and glory. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Having this hope, let us purify ourselves as He is pure.

SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS.

*Gal. iv., 1-7; Matt. i., 18-25.**

WHEN the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

We were, says the apostle, in bondage under the elements of the world. Just as the heir of some earthly kingdom during his minority is subject to tutors and governors, and though lord of all, is still not free to act according to his own will, but must submit himself even as a servant: such was the case with us. We were in bondage to the weak and beggarly elements; we were constrained to follow, not the free motion of our own hearts, but were subject to commandments and ordinances, which could not make us perfect, and were held back to a certain extent from that which was good and lawful, until the fulness of time should come. Let us then consider shortly what was the nature of the restrictions under which God's children were held and bound, and what that present freedom is, with which Christ has made us free. What is it to be in bondage under the

* Such used to be the Epistle and Gospel for the Sunday after Christmas before 1869, the octave of circumcision not being observed at that time.

elements of the world? and what is the effect of that adoption of sons which we have received?

In order rightly to appreciate the force of the apostle's words, we must bear in mind the object which he had in view.

The Galatian church had given heed to those, who came to them from Judea, insisting that circumcision, and the strict observance of the letter of the law of Moses, were binding upon the Gentile converts; that Jewish days and times, Jewish feasts, Jewish ordinances, were still binding even upon those who were in Christ. The apostle warns the disciples in Galatia against this error, and says, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing;"—if ye put yourselves under the law ye must observe the whole of it, and not fail in the minutest particular. We are not under the law, but under the gospel. We are not of the law, but of faith.

Christ Himself came into the world submitting Himself to the conditions of our fallen humanity, fulfilling the law, receiving circumcision, obeying His parents, and being subject to them until His baptism by John in Jordan, and then having received the Holy Ghost, though still in the flesh, went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil. And He, the Eternally-begotten Son, was only fully and finally set free when, having been obedient unto death, He burst the bonds of death and rose triumphant from the grave, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men—the gift of eternal life, the gift of that power of the resurrection, whereby He was declared to be the Son of God.

And the condition of Christians, as compared with the condition of the Jews under the law, is the condition of being risen with Christ, instead of being held in death ; of being in the Spirit instead of being in the flesh ; of having put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him ; and having put off the old man which is corrupt with his deeds ; of yielding themselves to the law of the Spirit of life instead of being subject to the law of sin and death ; of ceasing from their own works and letting God work in them to will and to do according to His good pleasure ; of having the law of God written by the Spirit of the Living God on the fleshly tables of the heart, instead of being under bondage to a law of carnal commandments written on stones ; of being able to do all things through Christ strengthening them, instead of being helpless and incapable of doing any good thing ; of being sons instead of servants ; of having the spirit of adoption whereby we cry “ Abba, Father,” instead of the spirit of bondage again to fear.

“ Stand fast,” says the Apostle, “ in the liberty where-with Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

Now, beloved, what is the practical consequence of all this ? How are we to carry out in practice the principles thus laid down ? How shall we adorn by our life and conversation the doctrine of God our Saviour ?

The Galatians followed a very fleshly, carnal form of Judaizing—they gave heed to those who told them that

unless they were circumcised, and kept the whole law, they could not be saved.

Such forms of seduction are not likely to be offered to us; but we are exposed to a much more subtle temptation: we are liable to renounce our liberty in Christ, and exchange it for the bondage to the flesh, to give up our holy calling, and to live again in sin.

Christ is our righteousness, and whoever seeks to rest upon any righteousness of his own, upon any works which he has done, or can do, as a ground of confidence towards God; whoever looks to be justified through any supposed merits of his own, or through any means, save the works and merits of Christ, he has departed from the law of faith, he ceases to be free, he puts himself in the position of a servant, and not of a son. He cannot say "Abba, Father," but must look on God as a Master, exacting from His servant the work, which he cannot perform.

Christ is our life—for we are taught to account ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ. Whoever, therefore, yields himself to sin, and his members to unrighteousness, makes himself a servant, and renounces his liberty in Christ. Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof; neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those, that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God, for sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace.

Christ is our strength—for we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves; we have no power to think any thing as of ourselves; all our sufficiency is of God. “Abide in Me,” said our Lord, “and I in you.” “As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without Me ye can do nothing.” “I know,” says St. Paul, “both how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”

Christ is our hope—for “Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know, that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is; and every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure.” All this is contained in that adoption of sons which we have received. All this belongs to our calling as children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Let us then, beloved, prove ourselves, that Christ is indeed in us, our righteousness, our life, our strength, our hope. Let us, by faith, walk as sons of God, that we may attain to the hope set before us—the living hope to which we “are begotten again through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, re-

served in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last day."

And to Him, who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.

Gal. iv., 1-7; Matt. i., 18-25.

HOW difficult it is to attain to the true conception of what our high calling is as members of the church—the body of Christ. The idea we have been brought up in, is limited to the salvation of the soul, and that of avoiding such acts as may bring the sentence of condemnation upon us. But the Epistle and Gospel point to something far higher than this. One of the chief things, indeed, which our Lord Jesus came for, was "to save His people from their sins." His Name is Jesus. But, how does He so? By being Emmanuel—*God with us*—in us. At first sight it appears a contradiction to say His Name shall be Jesus and then to say it is Emmanuel. But they are not contradictory, for it is by being Emmanuel, God with us, in us, that He does save His people from their sins. It is not in the power of man's nature, although it be the duty of man to help the Lord in this matter, for it is weak; nor is it by

the power of the law written on stones, although that law has to be kept in mind, for it is weak through the flesh ; nor is it by the power of the scriptures written for our learning, although it be necessary for men to read and understand them. Nor is it even by the power of the example of Christ, although that has to be followed, but by the power of Emmanuel—God with us, in us individually, doing good works in us—that we are saved from our sins.

The keeping of this holy season brings this to our minds—Jesus Christ come in the flesh—coming in the flesh. This should be the continual object of our meditations. Not looking at manhood in its fallen condition, except to learn its weakness, which indeed we must learn ; but looking to manhood as having the Son of God with it, the strong One—Emmanuel—“ I have laid help upon one that is mighty.” When we see Jesus, we see God in us, and in us not only in one stage of our life, but in all. He did not come as a man, like Adam was when He was created in all the maturity of manhood, but as an infant, and was born of a woman. If we then want to act aright, to think aright, to speak, to do aright, we must look to man as in Him, not to man as in Adam, the weak overpowered thing, overcome by every temptation, but as in Him, doing right always and overcoming all temptations. He was and is in man, in all the stages of life—the infant, hoping and believing in God in His mother’s arms, the obedient child, the pure, dutiful, diligent and holy youth, the righteous, wise, and upright man, the sealed anointed man, the man raised

from the dead, the glorified man. In each progressive stage He was Emmanuel, God with us.

And all this should be done in us also by Him, God with us, who are baptized into Him. It is for lack of faith in this, in realizing this, that we are such as we are, instead of being what we ought to be. It is not inculcated upon us when we are children, it is not apprehended by us when we are men. And yet it is what we ask God our Father for, when we bring our children to baptism. We say to Him, make this my child, Thy child, one with Thy Son. Let Christ be in this my infant as the believing one; when he grows to be a boy, let Him be in him as the obedient one; when a little older, let Him be in him as the dutiful, as the true, as the pure, as the diligent youth; when he is a man, let Him be in him as the wise, the prudent, the honest, the industrious man; and in all these stages of life, let Him be in him as the worshipping one, the thankful one, the patient one, the meek one, the holy one, when the time comes let Him be in him as the sealed, the anointed one. In the morning of the resurrection from the dead, the early morning, a long time before day, let Him be in him as the risen man, and in the day of glory let Him be in him as the glorified man. This is what we ask for, this is what is given to us, and if we abide in Him and He in us, will be continued. When we sin, we are forgetting this, not believing it; not realizing it, when we are indulging in wrong thoughts, wrong acts, when we are speaking or doing foolishly at whatever age, are we remembering, that He is in us to do what a child, or

youth, or man of that age should do? No, we are forgetting it, we are grieving, vexing, resisting Him, endeavouring to make Him withdraw Himself from us, so that He shall no longer be Emmanuel to us. We do not ask of an infant to have the virtues that belong to a boy, nor of a boy those that belong to a youth, nor of a youth those that belong to a man, nor of a man not sealed those that belong to a sealed man, nor of a man in this flesh those that belong to resurrection men, nor of a resurrection man those that belong to a glorified one—but we do ask of each one who is baptized to bring forth the virtues of his age, because He who is Emmanuel is with him, in him.

We keep then the feast of Christmas believing His Name is Emmanuel, God with us, from our baby-hood *upwards*, and we come to His holy sacrament that we may continually renew the receiving of Him in us.

Let him be found in you then at all ages of your existence, let Him be found in you in the morning of the resurrection from the dead, or you will not rise at that time. Let him be found in you in the day of glory, or you will not be glorified, for it is "*Emmanuel*" that does it in all.

CIRCUMCISION.

Col. ii., 8-17; Luke ii., 15-21.

THE circumcision of the Lord on the 8th day after His birth, of which we have the narrative in the Gospel for this day, is the first and the greatest proof, that He became very and true man of flesh and blood like to ours. Further, it is the great proof, that He took our nature, not in the condition of righteousness, in which God created man, not therefore *in itself* immaculate, but in the condition to which it had been brought through the sin of man. In Christ Himself there was no sin either of flesh or spirit—God forbid! nevertheless He was born *under* the law, and of this His circumcision was the irrefutable sign. Now consider all that is contained in these words, “Christ was born under (and therefore subject to) the law.” It proves (as we have said, and repeat) that Christ, the Holy One of God, took our nature subject to infirmity and temptation, to evil and death, taking which, indeed, He still remained holy and undefiled; not only this, it proves also that He took part with us sinners, and vouchsafed to be reckoned among the transgressors. He willingly submitted to be brought under the curse of the law,

being made a curse for us. The law is not made for the righteous, but for the unrighteous. The righteous man doeth righteousness out of the righteousness of his own heart, he needeth no law. Such of all the sons of women is Christ alone. It is when men have fallen from righteousness, that God's method of dealing with them in their natural or birth state, is in the form of law, with its decrees, and its penalties, and its curses, making known to him in his state of ignorance, what is God's will, and enforcing on the disobedient the fears of judgment, and the consequences of sin. The law of Moses is but the expression of the mind of God towards man, modified by adaptation to the Jewish nation. If man is to be reconciled to God, he must be reconciled through obedience to the law of God, therefore we may venture to say, that not only the sacrifice of Christ for sin, but the obedience of Christ, in our very nature, to the righteous law of God, was essentially necessary to our salvation. He that should redeem Israel must be an Israelite, and must in all things fulfil the law given by God to Israel. He that should redeem mankind must be a man, and must fulfil in all things the law of God to man. Therefore was Christ made of a woman, made under the law, therefore was He circumcised on the eighth day; therefore for thirty years was He obedient in all things to all the laws of God and man, therefore in order to fulfil all righteousness, He must receive from the hand of John the baptism of repentance. Such are some of the truths conveyed to us by this event in our Saviour's life, and narrated in the Gospel. The Epistle

opens to us the yet nearer and closer connection, which we have in this and in all that our Saviour did and suffered in His life and in His death. His example shows us that it is only by self-sacrifice, by resignation of the creature will, to the will of God our Father, finally it is only by dying to the flesh and living to God in a new and spiritual existence, that we can escape eternal wrath, and enter upon life everlasting. How shall we attain to it? The apostle tells us, "In Christ dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are in Him complete," or rather fulfilled, made to have part in that fulness, as the apostle in the Epistle to the Ephesians says of the Church, that it is "His body, the fulness of Him, that filleth all in all." Therefore if you be truly one with Him, baptized into Him, true members of His body, united to Him in one life by the Holy Ghost, all that is true of Christ is true of you. In His obedience to the law of God you are obedient. His circumcision was the outward token, that man hath put off the body of the sins of the flesh. If you be one with Him, that token is true of you as of Him, for you cannot be one with Him, who is risen from the dead, except you have been quickened from the death of sin, and raised through Him, and through the same operation of God, whereby He was raised. This day therefore is a call to you to press nearer and more near to your risen Lord. Seek always to bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus, the life as well as the death may be manifested in you. There is no hope for you but in Christ, nor hope that you abide in Christ, except

by continual death and continual resurrection through the power of God. "I protest," says the apostle, "I die daily." Let this be your true protest, and let your life in the flesh be by faith of the Son of God, who hath loved you and given Himself for you. For it is no partial cutting off of the sins of the flesh, no partial amendment of our habits, no partial resignation of our will, to which we are called, or by which the righteousness of God can be fulfilled in us. The sacrifice must be total—crucified to the world, dead to the natural man, our life must be hid with Christ in God, and so, when Christ, who is our Life shall appear, we also shall appear with Him in glory.

OCTAVE OF CIRCUMCISION.

Col. ii., 8-17 ; Luke. ii., 15-21.

THE apostle warns the church against robbers ; “ Beware, lest any man spoil you ; ” he warns against robbers coming in the form of benefactors ; against those who come proffering help. Men said to the believers in Christ, We know what you want ; you seek a cure of the inveterate sinfulness of your nature ; we have a cure to administer ; we can tell you of specifics, of remedies, which are the prescriptions of the wisest men who have ever lived, remedies, of world-wide fame ; time honoured remedies, which have come down from father to son, to which one generation after another has set the seal of approval ; we propose to you helps, which God Himself, the God of your fathers, your God, has instituted. He has appointed certain ceremonies, certain uses of material things, certain consecrations of appointed times. He has given certain counsels of perfection ; we recommend these things to your adoption. Following the rules, which we have obtained for you from the treasures of wisdom, of traditional experience, of divine appointment, you will obtain what you ardently seek, you will make yourselves virtuous, and becoming virtuous, you will be admitted into communion with God and with all the high and heavenly powers, which He has created.

Beware of those benefactors with high-sounding titles ;

they will not bring to you what they promise, they will only succeed in turning you away from Him, by whom God's help for your difficulties has really come. You belong to Him, in whom dwelleth bodily the whole fulness of God. You are shut up to one person, whom you can approach, whom you can see and hear, and feel, to one who hath a body born on earth, enthroned in heaven ; from Him you must receive all that you want. All the help, that God is pleased to give you, yea, that God can give you, He gives by Him. All the sufficiency of God for the wants of His church and of His creation, dwells in Him, is at His disposal, you need not go beyond Him, you cannot go beyond Him. He is the Head of all principality and power, of everything that rules, of everything that attains pre-eminence and honourable distinction. Ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power ; He is the Head of all principality and power, and He is the Head of you, God's church, who are called to the highest place of rule amongst God's creatures, to the highest distinction and pre-eminence amongst all. The highest place, the fullest glory is to come to you by Him and by Him alone. By Him also comes the preparation for these things. He fulfilled in His own person all that circumcision set forth. He made our human nature to live, not to our own pleasure and glory, but to the will and pleasure of God. He put under the true law of restraint, under the obedience of self-denial, the nature which had fallen. He condemned sin in flesh, and in flesh magnified God's law and made it honourable. He performed all that circumcision indicated and meant, and then instituted another holy rite,

which He also exhausted. The death and resurrection, set forth in baptism, were accomplished in Him. He who denied Himself perfectly, died for the sins of all who had been ruined through self-indulgence, and having died for all, rose again, the beginning of the new creation, unto life everlasting. Ye are circumcised in Him, by His operation in you, you attain to the true self-denial. You are also baptized into Him, that that which denied itself may also die, and that having died, it may rise again in the glory of the regeneration. By the true circumcision we deny ourselves and renounce our own glory ; by baptism we are yielded up to God, that we may know and do His will, that we may be fitted by Him for His kingdom, and exercise whatever trusts and gifts He may confide unto us until that kingdom come. All that circumcision typified, all that baptism contains and signifies, we have by Jesus Christ. Through Him we trust in God, we have faith in the operation of God, we believe that God will raise us up, as He raised Him up. In our baptism we are not only submitted to a law that restrains our nature, we are buried into its death, and after burial, rise again to its glorious resurrection. Blessed are they, who are baptized into Christ, and who have faith in the operation of God ; who beseech of God to fulfil to the uttermost what in holy baptism He pledged Himself to accomplish in behalf of the baptized. But what shall be the misery of those, who have been baptized and who refuse or fail to ask God to fulfil what their baptism means, and what it indeed conveys to those who have faith in His in-working. When Jesus was circumcised, then was His name given unto Him ; then

He began to show the power of the name Jesus. He indicated how He would strip the principalities and powers of evil, of all might to do their pleasure with man's nature ; making man's flesh obedient unto God's law first, and then in flesh made obedient, enduring the penalty of the broken law. He spoiled the principalities and powers of evil, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them, rescuing for ever from their grasp, and from every pretence of righteous claim, the nature in which He triumphed. Jesus was circumcised, but circumcision was abolished in His church, though allowed for a little while to the Jewish believers, because of their weakness. He was circumcised, because He alone wrought what circumcision typified. He kept the law, and when He kept it and bore its curse, it was nailed to the cross, never more to pass from it to any man. Henceforth no man must seek to justify himself before God by keeping a law, but every man who will be saved from his sins, and who would be perfected after God's manner of perfection, must trust in Him whom God has sent, must receive all supplies, all needful grace and help out of the fulness of Him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The church strove hard to go back to circumcision ; almost the whole work of the apostle to the Gentiles was to hinder the return. What was hindered in one age broke forth in successive ages under divers forms ; forms as opposite to each other as the condition of the Greek and Barbarian, as the condition of the slave and free-man ; in every age men have been striving to please God and to justify themselves by keeping a law ; the church

baptized into Christ has been shrinking from and refusing His fulness. Paul cried unto the church in the first age ; the cry needs to be repeated after the lapse of so many centuries, Cease from the madness of demanding living service from that which is dead ; you were dead in sins, and dead in an unrestrained corrupt nature, which would have accumulated sins more and more, and for ever. While in that state you were joined to the Living One,—you were not taken out of that state, and joined to Him ; while in that state you were quickened with Him ; your sins were forgiven ; the law, that condemned you, was blotted out, you received a new guidance indicated in your baptism ; a passing away with Christ from the natural condition into the condition of the new creature raised from the dead, glorified and exalted to the right hand of God. Receive what Christ has to give ; welcome those, by whom He sends His gifts, esteem duly that with which His grace is bound up ; eat His flesh, drink His blood. Seek not to deliver yourselves from the curse of God, accept the deliverance which Christ has brought, be not willing to do without the blessing, which Christ has obtained for us, which He dispenses from the right hand of Him, who hath bestowed it. The church—as “ the circumcision ” (Phil. iii., 3.)—has a treble duty, firstly, to recover and to abound in the pure worship of God ; secondly, to rejoice in Him, by whom in one person that service has been already perfectly rendered, by whom in one body it should now be offered ; thirdly, to have no confidence in any help which we can obtain for ourselves, while we seek to know and to receive all the help, which God has ordained for us.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

Rom. xii., 1-5; Luke ii., 41.

THE Lord Jesus Christ will come again.

Everybody knows that ; everybody acknowledges that. It is an article of the creed which the church has repeated for several hundred years. Does anyone *really, practically* believe it as a fact of possible accomplishment every day ? That is the question to consider. Year after year—century after century, the creed has sounded in our ears, “ He shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead.” What effect has it had ? *Little indeed* as regards the thing professed. Do men live as expecting their Lord ? When the sun rises in the morning, do men believe that *perhaps* before that sun sinks into the ocean, the Lord may have come ? No, they do not, and they cannot believe any such thing. “ Everything remains the same as when the fathers fell asleep.” The world’s din goes on just the same ; and so it will be to the last moment. Up to the moment when God *shut* up Noah in the ark, everything was just as usual. No stop in the world’s ploughshare announced the world’s doom. To the unheeding ear *no note* will ever tell that the Son of man is *at the door*. Tell men

He is coming; “no doubt,” say they, “eighteen centuries have said the same, yet He has not come.”

Tell them the signs of His coming are many. “True,” say they, “but there have been as *many* and *more* before—and He has not come.” And in their *heart of hearts* they hope He will not come *just now*. Is it any wonder? When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do? Faith, faith in the unchangeableness of God alone can answer, “The Lord is in His holy temple.”

Your brethren all around you say, “The Lord will come”—so far you and they are alike. But you *hope* He will come immediately, very soon—you *hope* to see Him very soon—unless you are following a delusion. If this is not your hope, go and take your place with the multitude of believers, who believe He will come “at the end of the world to judge the quick and the dead.” If your hope is not that the Lord will come—is about to come *speedily—speedily—speedily*—much better for you to go back and wait as your brethren wait for an event *not expected*. Do not deceive yourselves on this point. The Lord’s work is the *harbinger* of His coming, or it is nothing. The Master of the house goes on a *long* journey—He tells His servants to watch and wait. This was His *written injunction* when He left them. He tarries long—and they get weary, and say, “my Lord delayeth His coming.” He comes, however, and sends a messenger saying, “The Bridegroom cometh.” It is a message to *faith*, and only the *believing ear* and the *willing heart* can receive it. This is what the Lord has

done, is doing—He is about to come, and He sends His Messenger to prepare His way. And He gives you grace to be amongst those, who gladly accept His message.

If then the Lord has announced (and has He not announced?) His *speedy* coming—if you are *expecting* Him—if you are *hoping, hoping, mind, hoping* to see the Lord, what have you to do? Take instruction from the Gospel and Epistle—*He* said “Wist ye not I must be about my Father’s business?”—This was His “meat and drink”—to do His Father’s will. Seek to offer yourselves a *sacrifice* unto God, and how? Seek as members of the *one* body to fulfil your place. Seek the good of the *whole*—the one body. Do not grudge against your brethren. Do not think, or speak of them, or *pray* for them as though you and they were not members of the same body. That is the way to frustrate, to oppose the Lord in His working. You believe there is one Catholic, Apostolic Church. Your brethren belong to this Church as much as you. They call it Apostolic—they know not why. You call it Apostolic, and know why.

This is the sum and substance of the Lord’s dealing with you—to give you to understand and know the meaning and the blessing of what they in common with you profess, and in common with you possess, but understand not.

You believe there is *one body*. You and they are members of that same one body; they seek to serve God according to their light; oft-times according to their own inventions. You are taught it is by *sacrifice*,—giving up

yourselves even as Christ did, to the will of God. It is not by vain efforts—by arbitrary, voluntary humility. It is not by individual carefulness for self. It is by the love of the brethren. It is by presenting your bodies (therefore your beings) a *sacrifice*, that you can please God, do His will, and be ready whenever the Lord comes. There is no other readiness for the Lord than to abide in Him and thus not be “ashamed at His appearing.” Abide in Him as the members of His body. Abide in Him as the branches of the Vine. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Jesus went “about His Father’s business,” and yet was subject to His parents. Let your heart be set on serving God, and neglect not the ordinances He gives you.

And now “the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” “For we being many are one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.”

The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.

Rom. xii., 1-5; Luke ii., 41.

THE Gospel of the day is the practical exhibition of that which is taught and enjoined in the Epistle. The truth taught in the one, and exemplified in the

other, is *entire consecration to God*. The Babe Jesus had been circumcised, thereby declaring that the flesh of man even when lifted up into union with Godhead, was in itself unprofitable, and thereby teaching that flesh when circumcised can be used for God. The circumcised child grew in wisdom and strength, and in the grace of God, and in the favour of man. God had joy in this growing Child, and man looked with favour on the expanding life of a lovely, obedient, truthful, unwayward Youth. In the humble retirement of his parents' house He was preparing for further lessons, and for further acts. He is presented in the temple, and the offering enjoined is made for Him, "His parents do for Him" as the law required ; year by year His parents go up, and doubtless He with them, to the Passover. But the time comes, when He should take another step in His consecration to God. At twelve years of age, when, as we learn, the Jewish boy was called "the son of the law," He enters on another phase. Till then, Mary said, "Thy father and I," meaning Joseph. Now He says, "My Father," meaning God ; words never heard before, and Joseph is never heard of again. Now the lovely, well favoured youth "must be about His Father's business." And what is the first step ? He lays down the life and vigour of youth on the altar of God. He is found sitting in the temple to hear, and learn, and inquire from those who could teach Him (and yet He had more wisdom than all His teachers), that He might step by step grow up into the perfect knowledge of, and devotedness to the will of God. He is found wor-

shipping, learning, hearing, and thus preparing for the hour when His life should be laid down a *sacrifice*, in order that the world might be reconciled unto God. And then again, after this first dedication to service, again He goes into retirement, and is subject to His parents; and for eighteen years is listening to all that the Father ("My Father") has to declare to Him. Oh! that our children, and our youths, yea, and all of us, thought more of the One so lovely to God and man. Here is the perfect example of "presenting our bodies a living sacrifice unto God." And this we are called to, and this we are shown how to do, and have grace given us to do. That which Jesus did in His own body in the days of His flesh, He would do now in the Spirit in and by His mystical body the church; viz., give entire devotedness and service to God. Now the way and means, whereby this is to be done, is pointed out in the Epistle, and this is two-fold: 1st, By presenting our bodies a living sacrifice to God; 2nd, By remembering and acting out this truth, "that we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members, one of another." These are the two ways we are to follow Christ, viz., by presenting our bodies a living sacrifice for God's service, by sacrificing all its desires and will to God, by bringing our bodies and all therein implied, and laying it at God's Altar, and praying and seeking that its lusts and appetites may be destroyed in us, as by a consuming fire, thus acknowledging that it is only as circumcised with the circumcision made without hands we can serve and please God. We know that in

our flesh dwelleth no good thing, it is only fit to be consumed, but when consumed or being consumed it can be used in the service of God. Jesus presented His body for circumcision, presented His body for God's service in the temple, presented it on the cross. The living sacrifice God seeks is *service* ; not words, or talk, or sentiments, or feelings, but service. The way, the only way to present our bodies a living, not a dead, sacrifice to God, is by making the will of God the *one* thing to live for. Why are we placed in various relationships and connections of life? They are the means by which and in which we can serve, please, honour, or alas! grieve and dishonour God. Why does He give us an altar, a priesthood, the sacred mysteries of sacraments, the voice of praise, and the service of prayer? Why do we join with angels and archangels, and all the host of heaven? It is that we may give a living sacrifice unto God, and day by day lay our bodies, our *being*, on the altar, and there yield up to God that life, which, if not yielded up, will and must struggle and fight against God. There is one thing, which especially stands in the way of entire consecration, and that is *self*.

Self-love, self-esteem! How are we to get rid of this, which is our flesh? By giving up our life ; we must *die* that we may *live*. Hold back *anything*, any *particle* from the altar of sacrifice, let there be ever so little reserved in the recesses of the heart, and it will break forth in boils and blains. Give all to God, and He gives all back, that you may joy in His service ; that is the first thing to be done with *self*, and the next is, to

forget it altogether, and how can we do this? by remembering that we being many, are one body in Christ, and members one of another. Selfishness, self-seeking in religion, is nothing but religious covetousness, and covetousness God abhorreth. Personal religion, rightly understood, is true, and absolutely essential and acceptable to God, if true; if not true, it is an abomination in God's sight. The Pharisees were personally religious, but publicans and sinners went into the kingdom of heaven before them. True personal religion consists in fulfilling our place as members in the body of Christ; caring for the body, thinking of the body, praying for the body, waiting for the deliverance of the body, when the Head of the body shall appear. Think of yourselves, care for yourselves, be religious for yourself, and you are Christ's rival; sacrifice your life, *die* to yourself, and live for, and as members of His body, and you are fellow-workers with Him. And now when we have entered on another year, and we know not what it may bring forth (perhaps the Lord Himself), let this be the thought, this the object of your life, to *die* unto self, and live unto God, that, when He shall appear, we may rejoice and not be ashamed.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

Rom. xii., 6-16. John ii., 1-II.

WHERE men are united in a righteous manner, and for a lawful end, there is God in the midst of them, ready to help them by Jesus Christ. The institution, upon which natural society is based, was founded in Paradise, and was honoured by the first miracle of the Son of God, when He came into the world to magnify and exalt all that was of God in the world, which He had made. Christ dispensed even to natural society that which should minister to natural enjoyment. Until the end of the world He stands by and supports that which in the end must pass away, much more does He rejoice to bless that which shall endure for ever. He gave material wine at a marriage feast. To His church, His own bride in the purpose of God, and in due preparation under the means of grace by God appointed, He gives the true wine of the kingdom, the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Marriage is a sign under which is mystically contained the union of God with His creation by the incarnation of His Son. The marriage in Eden typified the marriage of the Lamb, for which all things wait. At the first of significant institutions

Christ wrought His first miracle, which was a sign of the grace, which He would give to that which was signified. At a marriage He gave wine ; to that which marriage represents and shadows forth, He gives the Holy Ghost. In the Epistle and Gospel together we have Christ's first and last miracle. The first miracle, the supply of wine, the last which He has wrought as yet, the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon His church. The wine at the marriage feast was the sign of all that He would give, when He should attain to the glory, which even then He manifested ; the gift of the Holy Ghost was the beginning of the things signified. He was present first at a marriage feast. The first end for which He came into the world was to be present at a marriage. That marriage for which He came hath not been yet ; when it shall be, then shall it be fully understood that at a marriage feast He manifested forth His glory. The marriage is not yet come, but the espousals have been from the beginning ; "I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." The church is now a virgin betrothed. Every generation since the Gospel was first preached has yielded its chosen remnant, who have been willing to be "married unto Him that is raised from the dead." The multitude have despised the honour, but an election hath not despised it. Where the espousals are, there is the earnest of the joy, which shall be when the marriage of the Lamb is fully come. The highest attainment of the church now is the constancy of the betrothed virgin ; soon the betrothed virgin shall become the prepared

bride. The harlot who called herself the bride is first taken out of the way. Then is the bride claimed by her heavenly Bridegroom, and all evil powers, material and spiritual, the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies, and the evil spirit himself who deceived them, and all his evil angels, all powers of wickedness which would hold possession of the earth and hinder the establishment upon it of God's kingdom, are then destroyed of the Lord in the day of the wrath of the Lamb, every enemy is destroyed, the first and the last, whatsoever holdeth in bondage the bride herself, whatsoever hath seized and possesseth her dower and inheritance. The Spirit of God worketh mightily in this our day to produce in the church the heart of the virgin, the betrothed and espoused virgin. Soon shall all the infidelity of the harlot be discovered and judged,—then shall the same spirit of holiness enable the chaste virgin to become the prepared bride, and all wickedness which standeth in the way of the union, which God hath ordained, shall perish for ever. The matter in hand now is to recover to the church the virgin's heart; the heart of the wise virgin, who goeth forth to meet the Bridegroom, furnished with the true oil. Now is it said to the church, "ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming (for the revelation, the apocalypse) of our Lord Jesus Christ." All that you can receive until His revelation you have now. Having received His Spirit you can receive nothing greater till you shall receive Himself in Person. The more you are filled with the first gift the more will you long with holy longing for the

second. "If these things be in you and abound—an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The Epistle reminds us of the grace given to us, and enumerates the gifts, which flow from that grace as many streams flow forth from one fountain. Christ turned water into wine at His first miracle. "The grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto us" in order that we may first become that which is signified by water, and then be filled with that which is symbolised by wine. Being born of water we shall be born of spirit; being made clean by the life of God which "crucifieth the flesh with its affections and lusts" we can rejoice in the earnest of the kingdom, which only the sons of God shall inherit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God." If the sons of God, then His heirs—"heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be glorified together. At the marriage feast in the history, the Lord by a miracle supplied the wine, He employed others to bear it to the master of the feast and to the guests. In His church there is one fountain of grace in His hands. Out of that grace gifts are distributed to many. The right exercise of these gifts is God's appointed means for two things; first, for securing the headship of the church unto Christ; secondly, for securing to the church the edification, which belongs to Christ's body. In order that no man may think too highly of himself, let all together exalt the Head of all, by manifesting the grace, which from Him alone proceedeth,

and when the apostle has spoken of the gifts of the spirit, when he has admonished prophets so to prophesy as not to violate the balance of truth, when he has exhorted ministers and teachers and rulers to be faithful in the exercise of their several gifts, then he presses upon all the most excellent way of pleasing God—"Let love be without dissimulation." God did not make a show of love Himself, we must not make a show of it. When he has said love, behold what next he is carried unto. "Abhor that which is evil." The greatest evil is misplaced love. God is pleased with lawful love both natural and spiritual—unlawful love is His abhorrence. The best thing perverted becomes the worst. We love Him to whom we are married, we love with a pure heart fervently those who are His; we love His appearing, "for then He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied"—then shall God be glorified in Him, then shall all God's creation, which He hath redeemed, be made free for ever to serve Him for whom and by whom all things were created.

Rom. xii., 6-16; Luke ii., 1-II.

IT is impossible to go among the churches and to converse with the clergy and people of the divers denominations without being more and more made to feel the departure of the baptized from the law of Christ—from the law of this dispensation,—and to be conscious

of the self-deceit that rules among them, and to be filled with sorrowful feelings on this account. It is not their departure from the law of nature, nor the departure from the law of God, that we are referring to. The law that man shall worship God and do no harm to his neighbour, but good, is not the law of Christ,—but the law of nature—of creation.

It is not the work of the regenerating Spirit, but of God the Creator—the creating Spirit—and man is born with it, and it is written in his conscience.

The law of Moses developed this old law, and gave it greater force and consistence, and more definite directions how to fulfil it; and it is too true that even baptized men are breaking this law everywhere. But while this is very sad, no man breaks the law of nature and the law of God without knowing, and his conscience tells him he is doing so. And if a man tell him he is breaking the law, he cannot deny it, even though he may not repent.

But the law of Christ, the new law, is this: that the church is to be one body, to have one faith, one rule, one order, and that every member of this one body is to love that body and every other member of it, even unto death, and to lay down his life for it, and for them. This is the law of this dispensation, and the baptized are breaking this law, and they will not listen to those, who tell them all that they are doing is so. Every one of the divisions and sects has its own faith, its own doctrine, its own system and theory of rule and order. And they all say that they have faith in these things.

This is the point in which they are deceived. There is no word more abused than *faith*.

Faith is the gift of God. Faith is God's work in a man's heart. Therefore there can be no *real* faith in anything that is not the truth. There can be no faith in a lie. Men may believe it; may be convinced of it; may hold it so strongly as to suffer unto death for it; but after all it is not *faith*. There is nothing that men deceive themselves more in, than in what they call *faith*.

If faith be the gift of God—the work of the Spirit of Christ, who is the Truth—and if everything else is not faith, then God cannot give faith in that which is not *true*. It is impossible that He can give *faith* in that which is a *lie*. Then what an amount of feigned faith, which God never gave, will be revealed in the day of judgment to have existed among Christians both as churches and as individuals! And it is these faiths, not of God's giving, which desolate, which divide Christendom.

Faith is the gift of God. Faith is from the grace of God. The proof of God's grace being with a man is to believe, to have faith in, the *truth*. The proof of the work of Satan, or of the flesh, is to believe a *lie*. What lies are believed in all Christendom as to the way of worship of God, of ruling the church, of doctrine, of conduct, of providing for ministers and for the poor, &c.!

As I have said, the proof of God's grace is to give *faith* in the *truth*. This is the work of God, that ye believe

on Him whom He hath sent, that ye believe those whom Christ hath sent, that ye believe in what He commanded, that ye believe in what they whom He sends, teach, as to the proper form of worship, of order, of rule, of doctrine, of conduct. This grace has come to you. Be, therefore, comforted by the assurance of this grace, and strengthened, and confirmed. The antediluvians departed from the law of nature. God sent Noah, the eighth preacher of the righteous law of nature, to tell them to return to it. They would not listen. The Jews departed from the law of Moses. God sent John the Baptist to tell them to return to it. They would not listen. The Christians have departed, not merely as men from the law of nature and of God, but as Christians they have departed from the law of Christ, *i.e.*, the unity in the truth—the unity of love. God sends apostles and prophets to bring them back to it. Many will not listen to them; but many will. Our business, then, is—1st, To be conscious of, and thankful for, and confident in, and faithful to, the grace that has come to us, and which we have received, and in the holy eucharist to give thanks to God for this grace—2nd, To offer the sacrifice of the holy eucharist to our Almighty and Merciful Father in behalf of the *whole* body of *all* Christians, that they also may receive this grace, keeping our love towards them, in the unity of the body, unweakened by their slowness to receive what we have received—by their opposition, and by their enmity, whether they will finally yield to it, or whether they will refuse. And

how can we do this except by feeding upon Him, who is the Head of that body, and who showed us the example in His own conduct towards the Jews, even to the last, and laid down His life for them and for all—and by whom alone we can be enabled to do the same?

Therefore with this idea in our hearts and spirits, this day let us draw near and offer the sacrifice and receive the communion of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, that we may be enabled to fulfil the directions of the apostle in the Epistle of the day, each one in his place, as members of the one body in whose behalf we intercede, and in the communion of which we receive.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

Rom. xii., 16; Matt. viii., 1-13.

“ **G**o thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.”

The healing of the centurion’s servant bears all the marks of the miraculous in an extraordinary degree, but it also bears another character, viz: that of strong, undoubting faith on the part of the individual, who thus sought help from Him, in whom alone help is to be found under all our difficulties and troubles.

This miracle, and that which the Lord wrought for the daughter of the Syrophenician woman, are the two exceptional cases recorded in the Gospels where the Lord went out of His way, so to speak, on behalf of those, who were not of Israel after the flesh; and the prominent element in both cases is the great faith of those, who thus, as it were, took the kingdom of heaven by violence.

Nothing can be more touching than the appeal of the Syrophenician woman to our Lord in behalf of her daughter. Our Lord had come into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and would not that any man should know it. But He could not be hid. This woman found Him out, and continued to cry to Him for mercy in spite of His

refusal to answer; and still persevered although the disciples pressed Him to send her away, and even when our Lord put her off, saying He was not sent, save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and that it was not meet to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs, she still persevered, claiming at any rate permission, which was allowed even to the dogs, to pick up the crumbs that fell from their masters' table, till at length her faith elicited from the Lord the answer "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

In like manner the centurion, calling to mind his own authority over those set under him, and their submission to his orders, petitioned the Lord in favour of his servant, saying, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed," whereupon the Lord replied in nearly the same words, "Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour." The faith of the centurion gave occasion to the Lord to announce prophetically the coming of that day, when the power of faith should be displayed among the heathen in a degree far surpassing anything which the Jews had displayed; that they should come from the east and from the west, and should sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God. These two miracles have indeed many features in common to distinguish them from the other miraculous acts recorded in the Gospel.

The Jews were a people who had already been brought

into covenant with God. The Messiah was promised to their fathers, and they had no doubt that when He should appear, He would come for their salvation and would greatly exalt them as a nation. They claimed Him as their King ; David had desired to build an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob in their city of Jerusalem, and Solomon had built Him a house. They would not eat with unwashed hands, nor would they eat or associate with the Gentiles, for fear of being defiled. It had been the privilege of their chosen nation to eat angels' food in the wilderness, and Moses and the elders of the people had seen God on the holy mount, and had eaten and drunk before Him. To them belonged the law and the covenant of promises and the lively oracles. Of them after the flesh came the Messiah Himself. But the Jews in these later generations had lost the faith, which had distinguished their fathers and had presumed on their privileges, not knowing that without faith it is impossible to please God, for that he who cometh to Him must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. Accordingly, when the Lord came to His own, His own received Him not, and after the Gospel had been first preached to the Jews and they counted themselves unworthy of the great salvation offered to them, the Gospel was preached to the Gentiles.

These two, the centurion and the woman of Canaan, seem to be a figure of those among the Gentiles, who should believe in Christ, of those who, knowing themselves to be sinners of the Gentiles, aliens from the

commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promises, should realize their acceptance in Him who died for them and rose again, of those who should be so filled with longing after the blessing, that they would be content to beg for the crumbs that fall from the Master's table.

But not only is the faith displayed on these two occasions conspicuous, there are other features also in these cases which deserve attention. Both the centurion and the woman of Canaan were entreating the Lord not for themselves, but for others, the one for the healing of his servant's sickness, the other for the deliverance of her daughter from the power of the devil.

And how can we better glorify God than by asking according to His will, by asking not for ourselves, but for others, not for the nations only, but also for the Jews through whose unbelief and casting off we have obtained mercy and have been grafted into Christ? The great distinctive duty of the Christian Church is that of intercession. "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." God's willingness to give far exceeds our faith to ask; God's mercy towards His creatures is far in advance of our thoughts and ideas. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, and we are they through whom alone the longing of the creature can find expression before God, yea, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities making intercession in us according to the will of God.

We need not seek for grounds of acceptance on account of any worthiness in ourselves, while confessing that we are not worthy that the Lord should come

under our roof, that we are not worthy to pick up the crumbs under His table, still we may intercede for ourselves and for all those who are our flesh and blood, even for all men, for the world lying in the wicked one, for the creation groaning under the curse ; and according to our faith the answer shall be given to us in that mighty deliverance wherein the creature also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the children of God.

Rom. xii., 16; Matt. viii., 1-13.

YE are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises (or virtues) of Him, who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light. These virtues of Christ are two-fold, active and passive. The Gospel for the day following upon the sermon on the mount, wherein a blessing is pronounced on the meek, the merciful, the peace-makers, the self-denying, suffering, persecuted ones, affords an example of the active virtues of Him, the anointed One with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him.

The Epistle inculcates the passive virtues of Christ, of which His whole walk on earth was an example. In us the exhibition of these passive virtues must precede the putting forth of the powers, which can only be entrusted to such as have learned to subdue themselves.

The rules laid down in the twelfth chapter of the Romans, the latter verses of which form the Epistle for the day, are the practical carrying out of those words with which the chapter commences. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Then follow the injunctions as to our mode of demeaning ourselves in this world, which have formed the subject of the Epistles on the two last Lord's days, and which are continued in our Epistle. The matter brought to our notice therein is our conduct towards others, and especially towards those who are our enemies, whose conduct towards us is calculated to provoke ill feeling in our minds, and to excite in us a desire to avenge ourselves. "Recompense to no man evil for evil. If it be possible as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." There is perhaps no stronger feeling in the human breast, no feeling harder to subdue, than the sense of injury, the consciousness of injustice. How many a child bears on its heart through its whole later life the remembrance of some act of supposed injustice, of some unmerited punishment inflicted on it in its earliest years. All such feelings natural to man, we learn as Christians to subdue, and instead of rendering evil for evil, to over-

come evil with good. Esau, the man of the flesh, smarting under the sense of injustice at being robbed of his birthright by his younger brother, said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I slay my brother Jacob.” The whole history of the human race since the days of Adam’s first-born, the murderer Cain, is a history of the abuse of power, of God’s power usurped by man, and used by him to satisfy his own evil purposes. From the time of righteous Abel until the time when the iniquity of the sons of men shall have come to the full, in that last contest when the armies of the beast shall compass about the camp of the saints, the children of God have always borne the character of a persecuted people, tyrannized over, oppressed, taken advantage of by others, while themselves showing an example of passive endurance, and uncomplaining submission to the evil to which they were exposed, committing their cause to Him, to whom alone vengeance belongeth. St. James writes, “Take, my brethren, the prophets for an example of suffering affliction and patience.” When the Samaritans refused to receive our Lord and His apostles, and James and John said, “Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did ?” our Lord turned and rebuked them, saying, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” In our Lord’s sermon on the mount He said to the people, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy

right cheek, turn to him the other also. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy ; but I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which spitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." Such should be the conduct of the Christian in the exercise of those passive virtues, which were manifested in the Man of Sorrows, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, who gave His back to the smiters and His cheek to them that plucked off the hair ; who was oppressed and afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth ; who was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

We must learn to follow Him, we must be transformed by the renewing of our mind. What is required of us is not the mere resistance to those impulses which are natural to man, but that we should subdue the very thought of evil ; that we should by the grace of God subdue in the heart the first beginnings of that lusting to envy, that pregnant cause of wars and fightings, which is common to the natural man. The days are coming when the saints of God shall have to encounter the persecutions of the wicked, the contradiction of sinners, and the wrath of the devil, for the beast out of the bottomless pit shall make war upon the witnesses and overcome them and kill them. The days are coming, when that other beast out of the sea, to whom the dragon shall give his power, shall make war against the saints, and shall overcome them ; and we read of a third beast rising out of the earth who shall have power to

cause all, who will not worship the image of the first beast, to be killed. Whatever may be the purpose of God with us—whatever hope we may entertain of being gathered among the first-fruits to stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion, of being caught away, and delivered from the hour of temptation, which cometh upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth—this at least is most certain: that having such expectation, we are now called upon to give up conformity to this world, and to be transformed by the renewing of our mind; that we, being brought into such nearness to God through His ordinances and sacraments, through the sealing with the Spirit of the living God, that we who have the name of God written upon our foreheads, the name of the city of God, the new name, which Christ putteth upon us, should even now be without fault before the throne of God, should even now present our bodies a living sacrifice, should now show ourselves to be children of our heavenly Father, learning from Him not to return evil for evil, not to avenge ourselves, not to give place unto wrath, but to overcome evil with good. Beloved, let us cultivate these heavenly virtues; let us seek to be filled with the mind of Christ, that we may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Let us keep the feast, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, that we may be prepared to go forth in His time filled with the power of the anointing of Christ to heal the sick, to cleanse the lepers, and to minister the blessing of God to His suffering people.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

Rom. xiii., 1-7; Matt. viii., 23.

THE symbol of the ship has been applied in several ways to that state of salvation to which we are called. It has been applied to our Blessed Lord Himself, in whom are we and whosoever is baptized into Him. We are members of His body, branches of the living vine, and so long as we abide in Him, we are safe. It has been applied also to the church, in which He is Captain and Ruler. He guides and directs its course. He ensures its safe arrival at its distant haven. It is said on one occasion when He was seen walking upon the waves, that as soon as the disciples had received Him into the ship, it was immediately at the land whither they were going. But whether it reach the land immediately or not, while He is in the ship, the ship is where it should be, and the crew, if they abide in it, are safe.

And yet how often are we tempted to doubt His love, and to distrust His guidance; how often do we allow the thought to creep upon us that He has forgotten us, or even that He never knew us. In the course of our voyage through the ocean of this life, Satan, the prince of the power of the air, is many times able to excite the

winds, and set the waves in motion. We are none of us exempt from troubles, and by these means our subtle enemy seeks to infuse into our hearts fear and distrust. But why should we fear? How can we distrust? We are here to-day before God's Altar. The blessed Jesus, present by the Holy Ghost, waits to stretch forth His hand, and to give to each one of us His flesh to eat, and His blood to drink. Let us consider how we came in hither? By what miracles of loving care and guidance have we been brought this day to partake of this heavenly feast? Who, if he will candidly examine his own heart, will say, "I chose this path of life, and have kept myself therein?" Are we not conscious that, had we been left to ourselves, we should long since have made shipwreck both of faith and of good conscience? How has He borne with us in our waywardness; removed difficulties out of our way; in spite of difficulties drawn us onward on our course? Nor less has He dealt bountifully and mercifully towards us in His providential care for us in the things that surround, the events which befall us. How often have the circumstances from which we apprehended harm proved to be the instruments of the greatest benefits. How often have we been irritated, or at least annoyed, when projects on which our hearts were bent have been frustrated, projects which, if permitted, would surely have led to loss, if not to ruin; loss or ruin, sometimes in the things of this world; sometimes in our highest interests. Oh! brethren, though He seem to sleep, yet is His heart ever awake. It is not the cry, "Lord, save us," which offends Him;

it is the cry of despondency: “we perish,”—not our betaking ourselves to Him in every time of need, but the complaint here implied, and expressed in another Gospel, “*carest thou not that we perish.*” To betake ourselves to Him is the act of faith. To doubt His willingness to save, when we acknowledge His power—this is the sharpest wound with which He can be pierced in the house of His friends.

Let us at length open our eyes and behold the exceeding love, the love which moved Him to die for us—the everlasting love—the everlasting love which moved Him to live for us. Let it touch our hearts and inspire within us such love to Him, that doubt of His abiding presence, His watchful care, His unerring guidance, may be put away for ever. Come, receive the emblems of His love, and henceforth and for ever dwell in Him, and let Him dwell in you.

PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

THE church on this day commemorates the *presentation* of the child Jesus in the temple ; let us endeavour to enter into the object which she has in view, in thus recalling to our notice, and in calling on us to record before God, this solemn event. Mary the blessed virgin came up to make the customary offering for her purification ; that offering consisted of two *turtle doves*, one for a sin offering, and one for a burnt offering ; it denoted her *extreme* poverty, it denoted likewise that she, at least, considered herself a *sinner*, and needed purification, even though having faith and grace to become the mother of the Lord.

At this time His parents present the child Jesus “to do for Him according to the law,” that law which prescribed that every “first born male should be called holy to the Lord.”

They make their offering, they present the child, and two persons, at least, of those present recognise and acknowledge Him, and give thanks. Simeon was “waiting for the consolation of Israel,” Anna was amongst those looking for redemption in Jerusalem. Moved by the Spirit of God, Simeon comes into the Temple as the child is being

presented, and by the same Spirit it was revealed to him that “he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” By that Spirit he saw the babe was *Christ*, and by that same Spirit he broke forth into that song of praise which the church has ever since preserved and used, and Anna, a prophetess, “gave thanks” and spake of Him to those who, like herself, looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Here then we have the Son of God—for the first time entering His own temple—He is presented unto God. To the eye of sense there was little to see, a helpless babe amongst others is presented to God, but Simeon (to whom it had been revealed that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ) recognises the *promised Consolation of Israel*.

The eye of flesh saw the helpless child of a poor woman ; the eye of faith saw the *Lord’s Christ*.

The eye of flesh saw nothing, but the fulfilment of a Jewish rite.

The eye of faith saw the Incarnate Son of God coming to *His temple*, “the light to lighten the Gentiles,” “the glory of His people Israel.” So it has ever been, so it is now. Jesus in the days of His flesh came to His temple, but was not known, save by the few who waited for redemption ; Jesus came by His Spirit, and His voice was strange, only those waiting for the consolation, looking for the redemption, the adoption, heard His voice and gave thanks. Jesus will come, Jesus will come to His temple, the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple, but who may abide, when He

cometh, who shall stand when He appeareth ?—they who look for the consolation of Israel, unto them that look for Him will He appear the second time unto salvation. The first act in the life of Jesus was to undergo circumcision, thus testifying to the utter pollution of fallen humanity which in Him was unpolluted. The second act in His wondrous life was to be *presented* in the temple, an offering unto God.

He, the *only begotten Son of God* as to His divinity, emptied Himself to become man.

He, the first-born son of a woman touching His humanity is offered unto God ; He, the Son of God made man, underwent the rite of circumcision to prove that the nature He laid hold of, was in itself fallen and corrupt.

He, the Incarnate Son is presented an acceptable offering to God, thereby witnessing that that nature redeemed could worship and please God. It is a wonderful sight, the Son of God, Son of man, offered unto God.

No wonder that Simeon, when he saw the Lord's Christ presented unto God, and knowing it was the Christ, should take Him in his arms and bless God.

No wonder that his soul was satisfied, and that he should say “ Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.”

He had waited for the consolation of Israel, now he has seen it, and is satisfied.

Mark, “ He was a just man and devout, and waited for the consolation of Israel ” and “ the Holy Ghost was

upon Him," *therefore* when the Lord came (even this babe) he knew, and welcomed Him and rejoiced.

It is thus we are to wait for Him, who will assuredly come; we are to be just, righteous, worshipful; waiting in the Holy Ghost; this is our calling, this our preparation, to walk in truth and righteousness, to walk in the ways, the ordinances of God by the Spirit. Thus, and thus only can we be ready for Him who will come to His temple.

This same Jesus, who as on this day was presented a babe in the temple, who "hung upon God from His mother's breast" who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and being born, was circumcised in the flesh, and offered Himself even *in infancy* unto God.

This same Jesus will appear again to them that look for "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body;" yea, and not only so, but the offering, which shall be offered, acceptable to God, is the *Christ* of God, Jesus and His body. Let us then with patience wait for it, "we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope."

The Lord will come to His temple suddenly, how, when, we know not; let us have grace to expect, to desire, to wait, to be ready, let us seek to attain unto the resurrection. "For the Lord Himself shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first, then we which are alive, (waiting for the consolation of Israel) and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER CIRCUMCISION.

Col. iii., 12 ; Matt. xiii., 24-30.

FEW chapters in scripture are more misunderstood by the church in general, than this from which the Gospel of the day is taken. It is commonly supposed that this series of parables indicates the gradual increase of prosperity of the kingdom of God in the earth, by the preaching of the Gospel, &c. ; whereas they all have a contrary signification, and show that all the efforts of God in the present dispensation to establish His kingdom and rule on the earth end in failure, and that the Lord Himself must come with His holy angels to cast out the wicked, and to bring with Him His brethren, the children of God, to be manifested as the rulers in that kingdom in order to establish it.

If there be the seed of the word of the kingdom sown, that should have made all hearts believing and obedient, three parts fail. If there be wheat sown, the seed of God, men of truth, which should have propagated itself through all the earth, the enemy fills the world with tares, the children of emptiness and vanity, of hypocrisy and of falsehood, and of disappointment to God ; and so forth, with the remainder of the chapter.

These parables teach us what all scripture teaches us, viz: that the only hope is the coming of the *Unfailing One*, and not men, the failing ones. We never can have it too often reiterated in our ears, that “the just shall live by faith,” that is, that we, the *failing ones*, shall live by faith in the *Unfailing One*.

As one wrote the other day to his parishioners:—
“ Dear brethren, cleave to Jesus, in whose heavenly kingdom there is no apostacy. Yet why? not because saved men would not of themselves fall away, but because Jesus has covenanted they never shall. ‘I give unto them (my disciples) eternal life.’ Oh, for my part I would rather trust for the eternity of my salvation to the covenant promise of Jesus, than to my own even glorified nature. After Adam, I will trust to nothing that is merely human.”

Now if these parables plainly show us the failure of all the means used by God, why should we be cast down or despond, because at the end of this dispensation we see all things failing, and that failing rapidly increasing? And why should we despond or doubt, because we see our own work, which was apparently to be one of reparation and restoration, apparently making but little progress comparatively, and apparently failing in its end and purpose, and succeeding only with a small remnant?

God’s work at the end of each dispensation has always been an apparent failure; not that He failed, but it seemed so, and indeed it must necessarily be so. If the work of God succeeded, and had great and wide success,

then the end of each dispensation would not come; it would be continued on. If Noah and Enoch had succeeded in bringing multitudes of the antedeluvians to repentance, the deluge would not have swept men away. If God could have found ten righteous men in Sodom, the fire would not have descended. If the Jews had yielded to John the Baptist and to the apostles to the circumcision, Jerusalem and the Jews would have remained the centre of the world, the city and people of God.

If the Lord's work now prevailed widely and extensively, the apostacy would not come, nor antichrist, nor the Lord. At the beginning God did His work and created man with the law of conscience in his heart, but Noah could not bring them back to that law. Moses established God's law in Israel, but John the Baptist could not bring them back to it. The apostles established Christ's law in the church, but we shall not bring them back to it.

Therefore, while on the one hand we should be afflicted, and very sorry for the things that are coming upon those who delay accepting the work of the Lord, and much more those who will reject it altogether; sorry because men reject God's law, sorry for those who will suffer more or less according as they reject His law, and His way of teaching and ministering the law according to the new covenant; and while we should also lament wherein in any way we show that we are failing creatures also coming short of being His true witnesses; yet on the other hand, instead of allowing ourselves to despond by an apparent want of wide-spread success, we should

rather the more believe, and look for the thing being done by the *Unfailing One* Himself, when he sees how weak we are. At the beginning of a dispensation God's work has always much success, otherwise that dispensation could not be established. But at the end of it, it cannot have much success, or the dispensation would not be changed.

When we can say our righteousness is like filthy rags, and our iniquities have, like the wind, taken us away, then will His own arm bring salvation; and when we shall say "We have not wrought any deliverance in the earth, neither have the inhabitants of the world fallen;" then will He say to us, "Thy dead men shall live. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a moment, until the indignation be overpast"—the indignation upon those who oppose His kingdom, not upon those who in the midst of failure seek to bring it in.

For let us remember in the midst of apparent failure, how different will be the dealings of the Lord and His manner of conduct towards those, who receive and in their worship endeavour to do this work, and those who oppose it.

How different were the Lord's ways to Enoch and to Noah, and to those who refused to listen to them; to Lot and to his relatives who would not listen to him; to the Jews, who listened to John and the apostles, and to those who refused to do so. To the one salvation, grace, pity, mercy; to the other tribulation and anguish, even though their souls were saved afterwards. So now.

Therefore we wait upon Him, offering His holy sacrifice, and partaking of His holy communion. We know that it is not because of our faithfulness, righteousness, or zeal, that the Lord will set all things right, but because of His own faithfulness, righteousness, and zeal, and because He *fails* not. Therefore we wait upon Him in the midst of failures on every side, which only increase our faith the more, our certainty the more, that He will come and help us. We worship God, because we seek to be on His side in desiring that He might set the church to rights, and so be ready for His coming; or if that succeeds not, that He may come and set things to rights; and we offer this holy sacrifice to Him, that for the sake of Christ Jesus He may send the Lord of all the earth.

And we partake of the holy communion to show that we are of one mind with Him in this matter. And so in this spirit and in this mind let us worship God. Let us lift up the acceptable sacrifice to Him and partake of this holy communion, that makes us acceptable too, that we may be among the true wheat, by feeding on Him, who is bread from heaven.

And so will the Lord spare you, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him—notwithstanding a thousand failures you shall be His in the day when He maketh up His jewels.

Col. iii., 12; Matt. xiii., 24-30.

THE elect of God are those, whom He chooses out of this evil world, and by His sovereign grace, not without their wills, brings them through penitence and faith to be denizens of His kingdom, citizens of the Jerusalem above. These are the family of God; they are baptized into Christ, they constitute the one body. Through the death and resurrection of Christ they have put off the old man, and have put on the new man, which is renewed according to the image of Him that created him; therefore they are clothed with all those godly virtues with which Christ hath clothed and adorned this mortal, fallible, sinful nature of ours—even now in this mortal body the inner man of the heart is renewed by heavenly birth, and clothed with these glorious robes—bowels of mercies, the affections and sympathies overflowing with the pitifulness of God; goodness profitable to others manifested in all courtesy of kindness; lowliness, which is quick to discern the good that is in others, and therefore counteth others better than ourselves; meekness, which disappoints the malice or careless courtesy of others, for it will not readily take offence, a quality most needful to those engaged in the work and service of God; long-suffering, which bears with the infirmities and backwardness, as well as with the open provocations, of others; forbearing and graciously forgiving, among ourselves and one

another, as our very standing in Christ proves that He hath forgiven all of us. And over all these holy robes let the mantle of love be fastened and flow down ; love, which is only in God, and in us by the Holy Ghost, which completes, and perfects, and keeps in their place all other heavenly garments. Merciful and kind, lowly and meek, long-suffering, forbearing and forgiving, and replete with love—this is the character of those that are born of God, the citizens of the heavenly country. O blessed family of God, composed of such sons and daughters ! In them the peace of God abides and rules. His word, His whole truth dwells richly in them ; they are filled with divine wisdom by the Holy Ghost. Blessed is their dwelling, a house not made with hands, it resounds with the melody of joy and praise ; each one animates and edifies the other ; grace fills the heart, and they give utterance unceasingly to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. Such are the children of the kingdom, whom God hath chosen out of the world ; new created in Christ Jesus ; exalted with Christ into the heavenlies, where with Christ they abide at the right hand of God. On earth they are still in the mortal flesh ; in spirit let them ascend into the heavenlies, and there continually dwell. But yet on earth God hath still a work for them to do, a purpose by them to be accomplished ; therefore hath He sown them in the field, the world, and in that field they must remain for a while, and grow up unto perfection, until in the consummation of the dispensation the time of maturity shall come ; for on earth, in mortal flesh, in the world,

is change, and growth, and maturity, and reaping ; or else decay ; on the earth, in mortal flesh, in the world, is imperfection, and seasons of darkness and slumber ; and to that field Satan finds access unperceived, and over the good seed sows his vile, poisonous tares ; and they grow together, both the good and the bad, and at first, in the early period of their growth, the field is covered with the green blades, and all is promise to the eye of man, for at that period the evil is not easily detected ; the good and bad are outwardly alike, and cannot be distinguished. Days progress, the time of the fruit arrives, but when the children of the kingdom lift up their heads, then are the children of that wicked one, the offenders, the workers of lawlessness also made manifest. Nevertheless, God's work must proceed ; Satan shall not prevail to cause Him to destroy it. God bears with the offenders, and we must bear with them, until, in the time of harvest, the ministers of the Lord, that prepare His way before Him, shall come forth ; they shall bind up the tares in bundles for the burning, and separating for ever the wheat from the field of this world, they shall bring them into the garner of the Lord. Mortality and corruption shall be swallowed up of life. Meanwhile the work, which the Lord commits to us, will be finished, and we ourselves shall make progress unto perfection, just as we daily remember our election of God, who sanctifies and loves us, and as we put on the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom God hath new-created us by the Holy Ghost.

SEPTUAGESIMA.

1 Cor. ix., 24; Matt. xx., 1-16.

IN the Epistle for this day the work, that Christians have to do, is compared to a race, and the end to be accomplished to the laurel crown, which was given to the victor. In the Gospel our work is likened to that of the hired labourer, and that for which we strive, to the wages which the labourer gains. In the figure employed in the Epistle we are instructed to strive, as though only one out of many could attain the object. In the parable of the Gospel we are shown that all, who really strive, shall gain. And yet in the Epistle it is implied that we should all strive with hope of success. "So run ye," all of you, "that ye," all of you, "may attain." And on the other hand in the Gospel we are warned that while many, yea all, have the opportunity of entering upon the field of labour, wherein the reward is to be gained, yet, after all, few are found who labour and obtain. We learn then that although there are many degrees of glory in the future age, yet is there one great hope proposed to all. And that none shall attain to the fruition of that hope, unless they will set themselves to obtain it with self-denial and energy.

Consider for a moment the example set before us in the Epistle. The man who runs, or rides, or rows, in a race must first of all submit to the discipline of training. He is placed under the strictest rules ; he curbs all his desires, he denies all pleasant things to himself ; in his food, in his exercise, in his rest, in all the habits of his life, he is compelled to do, not what he likes, but what is prescribed to him, to do and suffer many things which he does not like, and if in compelling himself to them he comes to like them, it is because of the object of hope, which he sets before him. And then when he engages in the race, what energy—what endurance—what self-surrender, ay, of his whole being must he submit to and yield, in order that he may win the prize !

Alas ! this is very different from the easy way in which Christians act with regard to the prize, which is set before *them*. The great majority, we know, are utterly indifferent—they never or scarcely ever think of it. But as to the rest of those, who do profess to engage in the Christian course, to hope that they may obtain the incorruptible crown—how many seem to think that if only they believe, their work is done, and that like Elijah at the end of his labours, they may look forthwith and without any real self-sacrifice and without any or with but little labour or exertion of their own, for the chariot and horses of fire, which are to carry them away into heaven. My dearly beloved brethren, let us receive the instruction of the Lord and of His apostle given to us in the Epistle and Gospel for to-day. Let us prepare for the race. Let us deny ourselves and be content to

endure the discipline, which is to fit us for the final struggle. Let us remember the words “the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.” “Strive to enter in at the straight gate, for I say unto you that many shall *strive* to enter in and shall not be able.”

We have arrived in the course of the ecclesiastical year at the season of preparation for the celebrating of all those blessed acts, wherein our Saviour strove even unto death for us—won the race for us—and received from the Father the incorruptible crown as our representative—our Head—the Head—and Prince—and First-fruits of the children of men. The rulers of the church—fallen into the flesh—and contending through the flesh with fleshly elements, call on their children to fast in the flesh. We do not call on you to fast in the flesh. That is not the discipline to which we invite you. Your crown is spiritual, the race you have to run is spiritual, but we do call on you to submit to a spiritual discipline, in which you will have to deny yourselves and to give up even your own life, that you may gain it, and there is no possibility of gaining the crown, but by hard discipline in preparation, and hard striving in running the race. So run then that ye may obtain.

And what is the crown which you hope to obtain? Is it the eternal glory, which surrounds our Head in the heavens and envelopes the whole person of the Son of man? Well, in one sense it is. But as the laurel crown was the symbol of the moral and physical endurance and success of the victor in the games, so

your crown of glory shall be but the sign and symbol of something higher, which surpasses all thoughts and all power of language. What is it for which you long? What is it that can alone satisfy you? It is the most intimate union with our adorable and beloved Lord—with Him, who is the object alike of our worship and our heart's affections. It is the fellowship of that communion with the Father through the Holy Ghost, to which the Incarnate Son is already admitted. It is the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto man, and whom we shall see for ourselves and possess for ever. This is the crown of glory which fadeth not away—and this crown is yours.

I Cor. ix., 24; Matt. xx., 1-16.

THE lesson inculcated in the Epistle and Gospel of the day is the duty of perseverance and self-denial; and the warning given is a warning against self-confidence, and an undue trust in God's known calling and purpose in regard to us, producing where it exists a relaxation in that striving, whereby alone we shall make our calling and election sure, and not only that, but shall inherit that crown of glory, which is laid up in store for those, who by faith and patience inherit the promises. "I," says the apostle, "run, not as uncertainly, I fight, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest that, by any means, when

I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." The state of society in Europe during the so-called "dark ages," rendered the monastic system a necessity for those who during a time of such moral degradation, and absence of sound religious principle, had set themselves to go against the spirit of the age and keep their bodies, souls, and spirits pure from the almost universal corruption; and well and faithfully did many servants of God of both sexes witness for the holiness of our calling, and for the need of an entire renunciation of the world, a constant crucifixion of the flesh, and a bold resistance of the insidious attacks of the devil, in the retirement and meditation of their cloistered retreats. The power of evil was so rampant, that those, who wished to keep a good conscience, were constrained to do so by going out of the world. However little the system of the ascetics corresponded with the true spirit of the rule, laid down by the apostle, to keep under the body, and of the perfect witness which should be borne by the church in the midst of the world, we can only wonder at and admire the grace of God, which enabled these recluses to undergo such voluntary hardships and mortifications as they willingly exposed themselves to, and which sustained them in spiritual contemplation of the divine perfections, when the body was weakened by watching and fasting and every sort of mortification. No doubt men of God took, in those times, a view of the keeping under the body, which we ought not to, and cannot imitate: *ought not to imitate*, because we should look for grace from God to keep us in the midst of the

world, to keep us while coming in contact with the world from all pollution or stain or spot ; *cannot imitate*, because the power of the spirit of God is given to us according to our measure and according to God's purpose concerning us. And it is not according to God's purpose, that we should retire from the world or lay upon ourselves such penances and mortifications as were suited to times that are past, and to circumstances that no longer exist. We can however, and ought to learn from the past. "Remember," said Moses to the children of Israel, "remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations. Ask thy father, and he will show thee ; thy elders, and they will tell thee." And what we learn from them is a confirmation of that which the apostle inculcates, namely, the need of keeping under the body, and the power to do so. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye though the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." If Paul, in contemplation of the greatness of the reward, could say, "I keep under my body, and keep it in subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," who shall be bold enough to say there is no danger for us, there is no need of constant watching, of constant self-restraint ? So run that ye may obtain. Many run who yet shall not obtain ; many strive for the mastery, but all do not strive lawfully. That which behoves us is to aim at surpassing others in the zeal, with which we strive after the crown, in the mode in which we strive, avoiding all exaggeration, all fleshly strivings after spiritual things, setting an example

of the perfect walk of the perfect Christian, both in what we do and allow, and also in what we avoid and reject. Many are called and few chosen. Our Captain is Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful ; they follow Him and make their calling and election sure. There are those who have laboured long, bearing the heat and burden of the day, there are those who are called at the last hour whose labour is in the last time, and who shall be also abundantly rewarded, and we are among these last called ; we have the assurance of the nearness of the time of our reward. We see the ordinances of God restored. We see the order of God's house again brought out, perhaps even more perfectly than at the beginning. We have the witness of the Spirit to the shortness of the time, to the nearness of the end. That which many good and faithful ones longed and pined after in vain, our eyes have seen, our ears have heard ; to each of us the word of our Lord and Master is, " Go ye also into the vineyard and whatsoever is right ye shall receive." And the parable in the Gospel assures us further, that the Lord of the vineyard will give unto these last even as unto the first, and that all shall receive their reward. Let us then, dearly beloved, lay these things to heart. We are among the last who shall be first, but this is no fate, no unbending necessity, we must hold fast what we have, that no man take our crown ; our works, our witness, what we allow, and what we deny ourselves, must be at least equal to that, which those who went before have accomplished according to

the grace given to them, and to the purpose of God concerning them ; and especially should we seek to show that modesty and want of presumption which characterized the great apostle of the Gentiles, who though full of confidence, though ready, in contemplation of his being taken to his rest, to say “ I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course ; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me in that day,” did not therefore relax in his jealousy over himself, in his watchfulness and self-restraint. We may indeed rejoice in our calling and election of God, with full confidence we may look forward to the appearing of our righteous Judge, but that our confidence may not be shaken, we must remember to keep under our body and keep it in subjection, for that many are called but few chosen.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

2 Cor. xi., 19-31 ; Luke. viii., 4-15.

THE Epistle and Gospel show respectively the treatment, which God's word and the ministers of it should receive in the world.

The hearers of the Gospel are divided into four classes, of which one only brings forth fruit to perfection. The first class will not entertain the word at all; the second takes an interest in it for a time till it comes in contact with some hardness and impracticability in their nature, which hinders the truth from obtaining entire mastery over them; the third class receives the word and holds it to the end, but will not allow it to be operative and practical in them: in every case where the word, and the cares of life, the interests of the present world, and the desires and affections of nature present their claims for attention, the latter are allowed to prevail; the demands of the word of God must wait till the others are satisfied; the weeds and the crop struggle in the ground and the weeds prevail; the fourth class receives the word and yields to it, opens the heart entirely and unreservedly to it, and gives it full scope and liberty of action. Even in the fourth class all are not equally fruitful. The Lord marks three degrees;

three stages of consecration to God. In some, even of those with all of whom the Lord is well pleased, He has more liberty of action than in others; He can show them more of God's good and perfect will and can carry them further unto its exact fulfilment. Blessed above all are they, by whom the Lord can do most for the results which are at His heart, even the hallowing of God's name, the establishment of God's kingdom, and the performance of God's will. The apostles said to the faithful "ye do well, but do better still;" abound more and more; they testified of some that they did according to their ability, they called upon all to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, that they should labour to go on unto perfection, that they should strive to be without fault. In the fourth class which is fruitful, there are three classes still, in each of which is seen an advancing triumph over the causes of unfruitfulness, which hindered the success of the truth in the three classes called unprofitable. Some even of the good are more skilled than others in keeping themselves from the evil influences, which are set forth in the "birds of the air," in contending against the obstructive element of which the "stone or rock" in the ground is the emblem; in disengaging and disentangling and liberating themselves from the cares and lusts which the thorns represent, the marks of the accursed state, the growth of the ground which is nigh to be burned. Growth and perfection are set before the church, "Every branch in Me that beareth fruit My Father, who is the husbandman, purgeth that it may

bring forth more fruit." The Lord would address to all the commendation pronounced upon Thyatira without the blame. "I know thy works, thy charity, thy service, thy faith, thy patience, and thy works, and the *last to be more than the first.*" This is the parable of the sower, a threefold dishonouring of God's word in the world, a threefold magnifying of it amongst those who believe. Let the latter be illustrated in the church at this time. God has given unto us favourable circumstances, He has set before us an open door, we are not straitened in Christ.

All things are possible to those who can trust in Him, but the Epistle for the day sets before us how it fared with those, who in the beginning were the heralds of His salvation. They sowed in tears the seed of life ; they were men, but the word which they spake was the word of God. "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." The heavenly treasure was in earthen vessels. That the treasure might be destroyed, every effort was made to mar, to break the vessel. Hear what an account of himself he gives, to whom most especially was given to bear God's name to mankind. The Epistle of last Lord's day shows how he treated himself to prepare himself for his ministry,

to-day we behold what he endured in that ministry for which he was so severely trained. God was pleased to bring upon him storms and floods of affliction, a work was given him to do, and every power of earth and hell, and apparently even of heaven itself, stood across his path to bar his way. The church, which he was charged to bless, looked suspectingly upon him, and without confidence; God, who commissioned him, seemed in His providence to fight against him. Spiteful Jews, fierce Gentiles and false brethren were his relentless persecutors; his flesh had no rest, its food was withheld, its thirst was not slaked, it was worn out with labour and not refreshed by sleep; he was foot-sore by long journeys, he waded through swollen rivers, was waylaid by robbers, was in cities without friends, in the desert without protectors, his back was ploughed by the Jewish whip and by the Roman scourge, he was stoned and shipwrecked, "weariness and painfulness, watchings often, famine and drought, cold and nakedness" were his frequent, almost constant circumstances. But these trials were his lightest, they *were only the things without*; they were things *by the way*, which being endured to-day might be escaped to-morrow; his inward spirit was invaded daily by an army of cares for the whole church of God, "that which cometh upon me daily." This was the experience of him, whom Christ sent forth to sow God's word, and he did not flee from his task like Jonah, but ran the rough and painful way, and endured to the end. Yet he was a weak man in himself, for he said "to will is present with me, to perform is far away," he said

he was not sufficient of himself to reckon upon anything as of himself. Let us consider his example. He who conquered in him can conquer in all. Our outward circumstances are different from his. Those who have gone to their rest had their trials, they overcame by Christ, who enabled them; we are not to imitate their circumstances, but to follow their faith; we are not to create for ourselves an artificial, a fantastic arena in imitation of the real one in which Paul ran his race and fought his fight. The enemies of truth and of God will be more terrible in the last days than even in the first, God will be in the last times as in the first, a present help in trouble to those who put their trust in Him. Our duty is plain, to serve the Lord Christ, to bring unto Him our bodies, that He may do what He willeth with them for the glory of God. Duty performed, success is certain; and that we may both do what God expects from us and be counted worthy to receive what He hath to give unto us, let us be partakers of Him who hath done all the will of God and hath inherited all His promises. He worshipped God aright, He served God perfectly, He loved God's works with true and perfect love, He gave Himself for us upon the cross, the perfect sacrifice, He gives Himself unto us from heaven, He is in heaven at God's right hand, He is on earth where two or three are met in His name, He gives Himself in His holy sacrament, He gives us His flesh that we may feed and do the things proper to it, He gives us His blood to drink, that we may know that in God's church is the cup of salvation, and that we may shout for joy.

2 Cor. xi., 19-31. ; Luke viii., 4-15.

THE subject-matter of the Epistle of this day is the personal experience of the apostle Paul, more especially as he stood in relation to the Corinthian church, in which he had to contend *against* some who resisted his ministry, and were giving heed to seducing teachers. By this resistance the apostle was stirred up to remind them of what he had endured for their and the churches' sake, exposing himself to poverty, to punishment, to hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness,—these were his bodily sufferings, or, "those things which are without," that is, external to the mental and spiritual anxiety, which came upon him daily, "the care of all the churches." Let your meditation on this scripture dispel the notion too commonly entertained, that the apostles in the early days of the church were a sort of supernatural beings, and not common men like yourselves and ourselves, subject to the feelings and infirmities incident to humanity, to joy and sorrow, pleasure and anger, and, if resisted, subject to be provoked to self-justification, though condemning the folly of it ("I speak as a fool"), and let those whom the Lord has called to serve Him in this ministry count it not strange, if they suffer persecution in body, and grief in spirit, because of adversaries without, and rebellions within ; although their course has not been without self-denial, hitherto they have not suffered in the flesh from persecutions to the extent

Paul did, but they know not yet what is to come. But the care of the churches has come upon them *daily*, upon some more, upon some less, often to the burdening of their spirits, which would have been hard to bear, were they not encouraged to carry their burdens to Jesus and so to find relief. The matter is legitimately brought before us, and I dwell upon it for our mutual benefit, for the benefit of the church at large, that they may cherish good notions of what apostles are, viz., that they are but men of like passions with themselves, and that the members of the church may feel the responsibilities lying upon them ; the sin of so walking, either in indifferent carelessness or in vexatious resistance, as to bring a burden upon their spirits, because the churches entrusted to them are not living to the glory of God, nor prepared to enter into His glory, because the accomplishment of his purpose in perfecting the body by apostles is delayed, and the bonds of the groaning creation still made to bind. Because the adversary is still permitted to work by subtle devices, and manifest powers of these sins, is the church guilty if they yield not to Christ in His graciously appointed ordinances, and uphold them by their faith, obedience, and love. And let the subject be profitable to the apostles and ministers of Christ ; let *them* know that they are but men ; that they bear the treasure entrusted to their keeping in earthen vessels subject to be marred or broken, that they need the sustaining shaft of the people—faith and obedience bound into one by love ; above all that they need such a standing in Christ, such

an abiding in Him, as shall make *their* every act and word, *His* act and word, and such a communion with the Holy Ghost as shall enable them to walk in *His* light, and to pray and worship in *His* power, and to have the readiest access to God the Father through Jesus Christ. This faith and these principles working in ministers and people will prevail to accomplish the purpose of God, will speedily prepare the first-fruits for gathering, will hasten the coming and kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. Many a true cry ascends with one voice from the body, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” Nor must we pass by the lesson conveyed to us in the Gospel, which was not joined to this Epistle without an end, “The parable of the sower.” One may easily discern the harmony of the lesson which it conveys with that we have dwelt upon above, viz., the responsibilities of both ministers and people. The ministers (especially the apostles, with whom it is to propound doctrine) are responsible for the seed they sow, “the word of God,” rightly dividing *it*, suiting it to the ears of those to whom it is addressed, not in the way of pleasing the flesh, but of reaching the heart, not seeking to gain man’s approbation, but to gather into the fold of Christ which He has purchased with His own blood. Such should the sowers be, and next the *hearers*. Oh! with what preparation of heart should we come *to* the house of God, and go *from* the house of God, softened by meditation and prayer, that the seed may find good ground in which to fall and take root; and followed by the same, that the thorns may not spring up and choke it, remembering that the prepara-

tion of the heart and the answer of the tongue is of God the Holy Ghost, and that if His abiding presence is not cherished by us to open the ear and soften the heart, our hearing will be in vain. May the Lord help us His ministers, and you His people, so to abide before Him that He may accomplish all His good will in both ; to this end let us feed upon Him, by faith receiving at His hand, His body, His blood, which nourishes unto eternal life.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

I Cor. xiii.; Luke. xviii., 31.

SPeaking to God, whether in the tongues of men or of angels, is not charity. Knowledge of all God's mysteries is not charity, doing miracles is not charity, giving money is not charity, active service to God or to man is not charity, all these should proceed from charity, but they are not charity; they may, every one of them, have proceeded and proceed from selfishness, from love of self and self-exaltation, and pride, and self-seeking.

The opposite to charity is pride; pride vaunteth itself, is soon angry, easily provoked, thinketh itself right and everybody else wrong, has no patience to wait for a man who is doing wrong to do right, but condemns him at once. We have need to take heed to ourselves in all these points in all matters of private life. But it is not so much upon matters of private life I wish to speak to you this day, as upon ecclesiastical, church matters. The church is one mass of uncharitable men in all church matters. The members of every sect and party being ignorant that the sin of one is the sin of all, have lost sight of the truth of the unity of the body

and not confessing, when they see sin in others, that it is the sin of all, the common sin, are occupied in vindicating their own sect, and accusing others, and vaunting themselves, and puffed up as the true and perfect. There is no patience with other sects, no refusing to think evil of them. What I wish to-day, is to exhort you to have the charity that Paul urges, not only as individuals in private life, but as members of the church, of the catholic church. Charity suffereth long and is kind, suffer you long with all members of all the sects, and without regarding their perversities, be kind to them all. Do not envy when you see any of them apparently prospering and yourselves apparently not prospering. Do not vaunt yourselves as being alone God's church, be not puffed up because God has given you something more than them, for He has given it to you for them. Do not behave yourselves rudely and unseemly to them, because as yet they do not receive what God has given you for them. Do not seek your own good, but theirs. Do not be provoked by their oppositions, railings, slanderings, scorns. Do not think evil of them, but good, in as far as they are good. Do not rejoice when they manifest some great iniquity, and say, "Ah, did we not say so, and that it would come out?" But be grieved and sorry there should be such iniquity in them, and rejoice in all that is truth in them. Bear all things from them, and all trials in the gathered church, and from any in them. Believe *all* things. The want of charity is becoming manifest in that they will not believe *all* things. They will not believe *all* that is

in Scripture. They pick and choose, and reject something that God has said, that God would give, that God would do.

Believe you *all* "that is *written*," all that God would do, would give. They will not believe, they have not charity enough to believe that God would give and has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors to His church. Do you believe it; have charity enough to believe it, and that God has charity enough to give them, and to give you His Son, and to give you the Holy Ghost, and to give you the kingdom, and the glory, and the throne, and the power, and all that He has to give, enlarge your charity and believe *all* things. Do not believe that God has betrayed you, when you asked for these things. Have charity to believe in God's charity, and that He will not deceive you, has not deceived you. If an apostle or a prophet should by any chance say a word that should not be said, exercise charity that God is not misleading you, but is guiding you by them, and that an erring word is not going to mislead you. Believe *all* that God has promised to do, is doing, and will do. Hope for them, for *all*, even for the very fullest, highest place, and blessing, and honour, and glory, hope for them, hope for *all* things, you cannot hope for too much.

Endure all things, every trial, every apparent failure, every opposition of those who do not believe *all* things. Be like our Lord in the Gospel for to-day. Although He knew all He was to endure by going up to Jerusalem, He faced it all, for He knew God's glory and man's blessing de-

pended upon it. Set your faces towards Jerusalem, come what may. And when you have endured *all* things, hoped for *all* things, believed *all* things, and not been puffed up because you knew *all* things, nor vaunted yourselves because God had made known *all* things to you, and given you *all* things, nor been angry with those who would neither believe nor receive, but who reviled and contemned, and perhaps persecuted you because you believed and received them ; when you have thus exercised charity, then the time of the reward shall come, and when prophecies cease, and knowledge ceaseth, then shall you know that charity endureth for ever. Therefore in this hope and faith let us partake of Him who *is* charity, that we may have charity in us.

I Cor. xiii. ; Luke xviii., 31.

THOUGH one speak with tongues of men and of angels and *have not* love, he is as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. But if he have love then the more gifted he is the better, the better for the glory of God, the better for the interests of men, for the edification of the church, for the blessing of the world. Would that we could speak as men ought to speak, as messengers of God should speak, who have such things to speak from God, and concerning Him, as constitute the burden of our testimony. Speech is good when love is the speaker. We ought to desire that love might speak and not be silent. Knowledge is good, especially the knowledge of

God's mysteries, the things which never could be known if He had not revealed them, but which He reveals that light may abound and that works and ways of darkness may disappear. And prophecy is good, which speaks forth the purpose of God from the beginning to the end, and all the stages of its development, which ministers to man "edification, exhortation, and comfort," in hearing what God is pleased to make known. Knowledge and prophecy without love are as nothing, but with love how great is their worth ! It is well for the church when the knowledge of the secret, and the burden of uttering it are entrusted to love. It is good to remove mountains of obstruction which impede the progress of truth and righteousness, to make a highway for the Lord, when love directs and controls the power which removes the obstructions. It is good to remove mountains out of the way of the manifestation of God's kingdom, and until that kingdom come, it is good to alleviate the miseries of the present world. Let alms be given to the poor, only let love build the almshouse and dispense the alms. It is good to see self-devotion and self-sacrifice, but a man may endure to be burned because he has a spirit that will not be conquered ; he does not so much love the truth as he loves to overcome whomsoever and whatsoever withstands him in his ministry of it. Martyrdom is glorious when love is the martyr. In a word, mighty gifts and great performances, many services and extremest sacrifices, are not undervalued, only God would have them all sanctified by love. As the substitutes for love they are an abomination in God's sight, as the ex-

pression of love they ascend unto Him as sweet incense, as the savour of the sacrifice which He Himself hath appointed. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples." That which glorifies God and which manifests the church to be under the teaching, and guidance, and culture of Christ, we should desire with our whole heart. Blessed are they who labour that the much fruit may appear, the full result which "the spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind" can work in the body of Christ. Let every proof be given to the glory of God of the character of that blessed life, for which we are baptized into His thrice holy name, and of the power of that anointing by which the heavenly life is empowered for the service of Him who hath bestowed it. God hath put it into the hearts of certain in our day (may we be of them unto the end,) to desire that the sacrament of Christian baptism and the holy rite of confirmation should be demonstrated to be not barren ceremonies, but instruments of a sure covenant between a promise-fulfilling God, and a faithful people. What baptism conveys is the life of love, what confirmation bestows is the anointing of power; we are sons of God, if sons then heirs, if heirs then it is not strange that we should possess the first-fruits of our inheritance, the earnest of our kingdom. The perfect witness which pleases God is then borne, when the church is seen to be of one spirit with Him "who loved righteousness and hated iniquity," and then to be anointed by Him with the oil of gladness wherewith He was anointed above His fellows, before them and above

them and on their behalf, that they with Him might be anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, that they might go about doing good, delivering those oppressed by the devil, because “God is with them.” “God is love.” He taught us this lesson first, then did He open His hands to bestow His gifts upon us. “God is love.” “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live through Him*.” “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be *the propitiation for our sins*.” God commendeth His love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” “God is love.” He showed His love first by giving His Son; He shows it next by giving us all things. We saw the beginning of God’s love, when we saw His Son made a curse for us, we saw the progress and consummation of it when we saw Him, who bore the curse for us on the cross, dispense the blessing unto us, from the right hand of God. The Spirit was given, that we might see the proof of God’s love upon the cross, and begin to reap the fruits of it, in receiving the earnest of the “all things which shall be given to those, who are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ.” There are some who will believe in Christ as the propitiation, but will not know Him as the bestower of gifts, as the giver of God’s kingdom and the earnest thereof. And there are those who accept Him as the perfect exemplar of all virtues,

and the helper to virtue of all, who make Him the object of their imitation ; but they do not regard Him as the propitiation for the sins of all, as the Just dying for the unjust, as the alone righteous One made a curse for others ; made sin for them, to bear, in His own body on the tree, their sins, that by His stripes they might be healed. God, having demonstrated His love, demands the return. He looks for that word to be made true in His church, " we love Him because He first loved us ;" and " if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." " Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him." But how shall we evince our love to God, and to His children, and to His suffering creation ? In the Gospel we behold love in action, as in the Epistle we are taught the true doctrine concerning it. We see Jesus hasting unto the end set before Him, and on His way dispensing blessing, giving sight to the blind. We follow His example, not by striving to create circumstances for ourselves similar to those in which we behold Him placed, but " by filling up what is behind of the afflictions of Christ, for His body's sake." Our Lord turned His face toward Jerusalem, knowing that His sufferings were before Him ; He hastened to the place, where the curse awaited Him. We hasten unto the end of the Christian race, " for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The cross now, is to embrace the hope, to receive the earnest of it, and to press forward for its attainment, and on the way to give sight to the blind, to open their eyes for the sake of turning them from darkness to light, and from the power

of Satan unto God. Our work now is to hope for the appearing, and long for the kingdom of our Lord, and meanwhile, to render unto all, for whom He poured out His life, a reason of the hope that is in us, if they per-adventure would embrace it too, and with us hasten its fulfilment.

FIRST SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

2 Cor. vi., 1-10 ; Matt. iv., 1-11.

THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterwards an hungered, and the tempter came and tempted Him, and after he had finished the temptation, angels came and ministered unto Him. This is the substance of the Gospel chosen for this day, and custom has obtained in different portions of the church of Christ, of keeping a fast during the forty days from Wednesday in the past week (Ash Wednesday) till the Sunday before Easter. The fasting of our Lord recorded in the Gospel occurred once at the beginning of His public ministry, and only once, and it is out of the question for us as individuals to attempt to follow Him in it, and moreover, looking at the exceptional character of our Lord's fasting there seems no ground, from that which he did, to lead us to the conclusion, that our keeping a forty days' fast every year is an imperative duty, or even a profitable exercise. I do not stop to inquire to what an extent, or with what degree of intelligence or conscientiousness, this forty days' fast is kept in the different

sections of the Christian church, or by different individuals. There is no doubt, that many persons do make this period a time of rigid examination, a time for proving themselves, and a time of abstinence, in order the better to be prepared for fulfilling their Christian calling. All honour to those, who from conscience towards God do observe these days to the Lord as days of fasting and humiliation; far be it from us to impugn their motives or despise their actions, but among us no such period of fasting is either prescribed or recognized as constituting "a fast and an acceptable day unto the Lord." Though we use the Epistles and Gospels found in the churches of Rome and England, yet do we not enjoin a fast for forty days or lay down any rule regarding fasting at this season. It has been already remarked that this fast of forty days occurred once for all at the commencement of our Lord's ministry, and was not repeated. Moses fasted forty days on two occasions, while communing with God on the holy mount. Elijah also went on the strength of the food given him by the angel in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights, until he came to Horeb, to the mount of God. But none of these cases are examples for us, they are all exceptional cases; days of fasting we recognize, as for instance the day of the crucifixion, the eve of Pentecost, &c., but seasons of fasting we do not enjoin, neither do we lay down any rules as to the mode of observing a fast, but we leave it to every man's conscience, enlightened, where necessary, by the pastors of the church, to point out to him how this duty of fasting is to be fulfilled. It would obviously

be unsuited to this holy service to enter into explanations on this head, but we may perhaps be able to draw from the Epistle certain practical hints as to the true spirit of the Christian dispensation in reference to this matter of fasting.

In answer to the question put to Him by the disciples of John "Why do we, and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" our Lord replied "Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast." And He went on "no man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, neither do men put new wine into old bottles." It is as if He had said, The dispensation which is coming is one wherein a different order of things will obtain from that, which has hitherto been established. The followers of Jesus of Nazareth will always be exposed to trials and tribulations, self-denial will be the rule of their lives, the giving up of everything for the Gospel's sake will be with them not an affair of one, or two, or forty days, but that which they will have to put in practice every day and all day. The time of mourning with them will be commensurate with the time of their pilgrimage here upon earth. They are not among the number of those, who are rich and full and well reported of, and had in honour in the world, but rather of those who are poor, hungry, and persecuted, and forsaken, of those on whom a blessing is pronounced, not because they have their reward now, but because they shall be abundantly rewarded at the coming of the Bridegroom.

In this spirit St. Paul in the Epistle exhorts the Corinthians that they receive not the grace of God in vain ; the ministers of God, he adds, must approve themselves as such, not by prosperity but by adversity, “ approving themselves as the ministers of God in much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonment, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, as unknown, and yet well known, as dying, and behold we live, as chastened and not killed, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things.” There can be no need of special seasons of fasting for those, who are daily living in the exercise of every form of self-denial, who are daily exposed to the same trials, to which their heavenly master was exposed, who are taking up their cross daily, who are dying daily. Worldly prosperity, or honour, or advantage, is not the lot of the church so long as she is faithful to Christ ; and any who faithfully follow Him, who had not where to lay His head, will find that the following of Christ is the true fast. But although the mere outward fasting or self-imposed privations are not the true Christian fast, and bring no blessing, the daily practice of Christian patience and resignation, of humility and self-denial is not without the blessing of God. If we have tribulation in the world, we have peace in Christ, a peace which the world giveth not. If we give up father, mother, brethren, house, land, for His sake, we receive an hundred-fold even in this present time ; if we become poor, yet is our poverty the truest riches ; if we suffer privations in the body, yet are our spirits nourished as with marrow and fatness,

and while mourning for the Bridegroom's absence we are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory in the hope of seeing Him again, and being with Him for ever in His kingdom. All those who mourn for the absence of the Bridegroom are keeping a true Christian fast. Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger for they shall be filled, yea, blessed indeed, for He shall come and give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

2 Cor. vi., 1-10. Matt. iv., 1-11.

THE event commemorated in this day's Gospel is one of the most astounding in the history of our Lord, or elsewhere to be found in Holy Scripture. It is a great mistake to suppose, that the peculiarity of this event is simply that our Lord was on this occasion subjected to temptation. For, as for our salvation our Lord took our nature in a condition in which He was always liable to temptation, the devil at all times strove to get access to Him. The Lord was *many times* sorely tried—all those things in the world which are calculated to have an evil influence, were presented to Him as they are presented to us. The long nights passed in prayer—the exclamations extorted from Him by the ignorance and unbelief of the best beloved and most trusted disciples—the sorrows over Jerusalem—the heaviness of

heart at the last supper—the agony and striving unto blood in the garden—the bitter cry of desertion on the cross—all testify to the same thing, viz., the continual presence of trial and temptation in the flesh, to which the Lord was exposed. Tempted in all points like to us; unlike to us in that amidst all temptations He was without sin. It is therefore an entire missing of the mark, if we are led to suppose with many, that the temptation of the Lord was confined to this season of a few hours, perhaps of a few minutes, at the termination of the forty days' fasting.

In order to arrive at a more perfect apprehension of the real nature and bearing of this great transaction, let us enter with some little detail into the facts. First, remark that the Evangelist tells us that Jesus was led up—or rather carried up or away into the wilderness. Mark uses a very strong word: Immediately, or, all on a sudden the Spirit driveth Him—literally casteth Him out into the wilderness, and He was there with the wild beasts. And Luke, though he does not express himself so strongly, says, “He was led or carried by the Spirit.” I think from all this we may collect, that He did not merely take His own way under the impulse of the Holy Ghost into a neighbouring wilderness, but He was borne away by supernatural action of the Holy Ghost. I think that the circumstances render it probable that He was carried away and set down in the wilderness of mount Horeb, the mount of God, where Moses was for forty years before he was constituted to be leader and prince of Israel, and where again Moses fasted for two

successive periods of forty days, before receiving the tables of the law, and where also Elijah, after fasting forty days and forty nights, received his last mission to apostate Israel.

The end and object of this miraculous passage is stated to be, that He might be tempted of the devil, and accordingly, after He (also) had been without food for forty days and forty nights, He was brought into that condition, wherein the desire for food made Him peculiarly susceptible to the power of temptation on *that* score. Yes, and probably in that spot, where the Lord suffered Israel to hunger and fed them with manna from heaven, a food they knew not of, that He might make them know, says Moses, that man doth not live by bread alone, but by that which proceedeth from the mouth of the Lord doth man live. If He was there, the recollections associated with the place would prompt the answer, which He presently gave to the tempter. However that may be, the old serpent came to Him with much the same argument as to Eve. "If Thou art the Son of God, God doth know, that Thou hast power by Thy word to make these stones to become bread, Thou art hungry—Thou art fainting—God provides no bread for *Thee*, resort then to Thine own inherent power to supply Thy wants." But the Lord, filled with faith in God, rests satisfied in His love and providential care. The Son of God needs to put forth no independent power to satisfy His want or prolong His life. Living by faith, He lives in God—He lives by the Father.

The next temptation follows logically and naturally on the first.

First, the devil taking the Lord by his side brings Him to Jerusalem and conveys Him to the highest pinnacle of the temple, and now, as if assuming the truth of His Father's care over Him, he bids Him to put it to the test, and cast Himself down, trusting to the promise that angels should bear Him up. As the last was the suggestion to distrust, so this to spiritual presumption, and was put aside by that true faith, which is equally distant from doubt and from presumption.

Then last, carrying Him away again to an exceeding high mountain, the devil shows Him in a moment of time all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and offers to Him the whole, if only He will bow down before him, who is the prince of them. And this also, through faith and loyalty, is rejected with abhorrence.

Time fails us to enter more minutely into the history. Enough has been said to show, that this is a *real* but a spiritual transaction—real, and yet presenting, as in a vision, the life-long agony and trial of the Son of man, the Holy One, in our mortal and fallen flesh. We behold not only the trial and the agony, but the victory and the triumph.

From the cross He is beheld through death bringing to nought him, that had the power of death—leading in triumph the vanquished principalities and powers of death and hades. In His temptation He is beheld bringing to nought the spiritual power and influence of Satan over the body and soul and the spirit of man, and leading in triumph the flesh, the world, and all spiritual

wickedness, in heavenly places with Satan in person as their prince.

Blessed Saviour! Thou knowest the power of Satan and the weakness of our mortal flesh, for when Thou wast tempted Thou didst suffer. Help us then, O Thou that wast in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Pity us, O Thou, that canst be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. Succour us, Thou that art able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Thee. For in Thee we live—Thine we are—members of Thy body, of Thy flesh and of Thy blood. Therefore unto Thee, O Christ our God, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, we will always ascribe all glory.

SECOND SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

2 Pet. i., 16-21; Matt. xvii., 1-9.

THE apostle Peter, knowing that the “laying aside of the earthly tabernacle” was near, laboured that those, to whom he wrote might, on each occasion, be able to call to remembrance those things he had written, in which if they continued they should find an abundant entrance into the kingdom, ministered unto them. He, as the other apostles, had taught the church to wait for, expect, and desire the appearing and coming of the Lord. And now, in the prospect of his removal, he declares that what he had taught on this subject, and they had received, were “no cunningly devised fables.” The grounds on which he rests this are two. First, that he and those with him on the mount, had had a vision, a glimpse of that kingdom and glory, which they were to expect, and they had heard the voice from the excellent Majesty, declaring that the glory they saw was but the manifestation of the “Beloved Son, in whom God was well pleased.” They saw this, they heard this, there was no mistake. They had, as it were, been caught away, and seen and heard unspeakable things. Now, that which they had seen, as it were in ecstasy, of

which they had had a foretaste, they taught the church to expect and wait for ; and it was no mistake.

The thought of his departure, of laying aside the earthly tabernacle (whether by death or otherwise), only makes him the more anxious, that they who remained should learn that what he had taught them to hope and wait for " was no cunningly devised fable," no delusion.

The other ground is, that they had the prophetic word, and prophetic scripture, the very note of which is the kingdom. This was to be their lamp until the morning should dawn and the " day-star arise in their hearts."

This was the last word, this the last work apostles could speak or do. They were about to depart, the church was not gathered unto Christ. Still, the hope was a *true* one, it was not a deception ; what they, who were left, had to do, was to hold up, and walk by the light of the lamp, and wait for the morning.

This was the injunction of departing apostles. Would to God it had been followed ! The lamp went out ; the morning was not expected ; the absence of the Lord was no longer called *night* ! Men slept ; they that sleep, sleep in the night—sleeping is not watching. The breaking *away* of the morning has not been looked for with watching, straining eyes. The anxious inquiry, "*Watchman, what of the night?*" has long ceased. But God changeth not. And again He has revived in the heart of His children the desire to take, as a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path, the word, the more sure prophetic word, which has but one note, "*The Kingdom.*" Jesus, the Apostle, once more says by apostles, " The

night is far spent, the day is at hand ;” and they who hear and take heed to the lamp shining in a dark place, they watch and wait for the day ; they have renounced all other hopes. And now once more apostles say to us, “This is no delusion, no cunningly devised fable.” What apostles said as they left, apostles say at their return, “We wait for the day.” It is the night, but it is far spent. It is no delusion. Apostles saw, had a glimpse of His glory and kingdom. Apostles once said, “Take heed to the prophetic word, as a lamp, until the day dawn.” Apostles say again, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” Apostles say again, “The day is at hand.” Yea, and the fact that they do so, is the proof to those who receive it, of the truth of the thing asserted. Apostles are not for *continuance*, but for *removal* ; not to form a constitution for earth, but for entrance into the kingdom. The wise trim their lamps, and go to *meet* the Bridegroom ; *meet* the Lord in the air. This is God’s work. It is no new theory, no new doctrine, no new sect, no attempt to improve or bring in a better system of religion. It is not to teach men to die in peace and blessedness—a ministry, not headed up in apostles, can do, has done this. The one thing apostles can do, and apostles only can do, is to present the church unto Christ at His coming. The grace which apostles minister, and minister to the church, as God only knows how, is the grace of being found waiting for the Lord when He comes. Be patient, therefore, brethren ; the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

2 Pet. i., 16-21; Matt. xvii., 1-9.

PETER and the other disciples had been startled and alarmed and offended by our Lord's words, that He should go to Jerusalem, suffer, and die. Peter even set himself to oppose the fulfilment of it, and was told to get out of the way of the Lord, as an adversary. Then the Lord took Peter, James, and John, and showed them, that if they had understood the law and the prophets, they would have known He must suffer first, and receive the glory after. For He showed them His glory on the mount of transfiguration, Moses and Elijah, the chief of the prophets, discoursing to Him of His death, to be accomplished at Jerusalem (Luke ix., 31).

Peter therefore tells us to take heed to the sure word of prophecy, made more sure by this vision of transfiguration, prefiguring of the end and fulfilment of all prophecy. Keep your faith in the word of God, hold it fast, let it not go, feed upon it, live by it. It shall be made good to you ; it shall be found to be true.

It is written that in the last days perilous times shall come, and evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Last Sunday we had to speak upon the failure of reverence to authority in the various positions of life, in the church, in the state, in the family—and of faithlessness in trust, as the peculiar signs of the days we live in, and of the tokens

they are to us, that we have passed from the *latter times* into the *last days*. But there is one peculiar line of irreverence and of unfaithfulness to a charge committed, more painful, more deleterious than all others, and that is—irreverence to the written word of God, these holy scriptures, which He has delivered to us, the oracles of God entrusted to the care of His church. The old testament committed to the Jews, which they kept sacred and handed down to us, and the new testament, which Peter declares to be scripture also, delivered unto the Christian church by the apostles (2 Peter iii., 16; Romans iii., 2). All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and therefore is to be received with holy reverence, retained faithfully, studied, meditated upon day and night, as the inspired word of God. Look at the example of our Blessed Lord, He who was the eternal Word Himself, having taken our flesh, having become a little child, and growing up from that to youth, from youth to manhood; look how He fed upon that word. “Man,” He replied to the tempter, “shall not live by bread alone, but by every word, that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” breathed forth by Him. He said, “Oh, how I love Thy law; it is My meditation all the day.” How anxious was He to inquire of the doctors in the temple, that they might explain to Him all they knew about that word (would that our young men had the same spirit in them!), and because He, young as He was, had studied and meditated on that word, He astonished them by the understanding He showed of the things of His Father

(Luke ii., 47). And when He came to the hour of His first great trial of strength with the adversary of God, how did He overcome him ? Was it not because He had so read and meditated on the word of scripture, that He could answer, “ It is written ? ” Did not He appeal continually in all the course of His ministry to the scriptures, and say, “ they could not be broken ? ” And when He ended that period of His work, and rose from the dead, He opened the understanding of His apostles, and taught them the things concerning Himself by showing them, how all scripture, Moses, the prophets, and the psalms, had prophesied of Him, and of His sufferings, and of the glory which should follow. One of the assailers of the word of God has lately ventured to assert that, with the exception of two passages of doubtful import in Jeremiah and Isaiah, there is no prophecy in scripture. How mistaken ! There is not a passage in scripture but what is prophecy—prophecy of the sufferings of Christ, or of the glory which should follow ; and of the sufferings of His church, and of the glory which shall follow to them. What a different opinion did Peter entertain on this head ! In the Epistle of to-day, he bids us to “ take heed to that word of prophecy, which came not in the old time by the will of man, but by holy men of God, moved by the Holy Ghost,” that is, inspired. And those prophecies of the glory of Jesus, which Peter saw, were made “ more sure ” to them, for they had seen the glory in the holy mount, they had seen Him as every eye shall see Him, and they knew thereby the word, that had told before of

these things, was true. Keep then your faith, your holy and reverent faith in holy scripture, reverence even the book itself. I hate to see people irreverent even with the holy book, putting other books upon it, as if it were a common book. Without being superstitious, reverence the very leaves, on which God's word is inscribed, reverence the word itself in all your reading of it. It is God's holy word, His word spoken and written. Be not discouraged by any apparent difficulties therein. God has made much of it clear to us, which was formerly dark and obscure and perplexing. We feed in the holy eucharist upon the most sacred body and blood of Christ, the word made flesh, and our life grows thereby. It is an ineffable mystery—it is the medicine of immortality, the life-giving element of resurrection to the dead. But also, let us ever live by His word, that word which quickeneth, that nourisheth, that shapeth that life, that makes it take form and grow up into the stature of Christ. For the Lord Jesus hath opened, and is opening that word to us as to none others ; long hath the winter's cold frozen up the waters of life, but He hath sent out His word, and the waters flow. Desire, then, not only the sincere milk of the word, as Peter says, that ye may grow thereby, but the strong meat also, that Paul speaks of. Be not deterred, nor your faith weakened by the arguments of any man ; God will make good His word. Adopt the scriptures as our Lord adopted them. Be not discouraged by anything. Is not all that is happening around you, that distresses you, the very proof that the scriptures are true ? Is

every established thing crumbling around you? Are disobedience and unfaithfulness increasingly manifesting themselves? Are evil men waxing worse and worse? They should encourage you, not cast you down. Did not the scriptures say it should be so? Does not the same scripture say, "He that calleth upon the Lord shall be saved?" He that liveth by the word of God shall endure for ever. "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever." If He makes His word come true that speaketh of evil, will He not much more make it true when it speaketh of good to you, who live by His word and by His holy sacraments? Yea, He shall, He will make it good to you. Only hold fast His word, and feed upon it, and on His precious body and blood, and He will yet give you to see Him as He was transfigured, and to be transfigured yourselves, and that not for a moment, a passing thing, as on the mount, but on His holy mountain for ever.

THIRD SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

Eph. v., 1-14; Luke xi., 14-23.

THE Christian walk, both in its positive and negative character, is the chief thing set before us in the Epistle of this day. The word *therefore*, in the first verse, carries us back to the last of the preceding chapter, “Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” Then comes, “Be ye *therefore* followers of *God*, as dear children.” What a family of loving children should the church of Christ be! What! shall there be an unforgiving heart found amongst those whom God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven? Are you abiding in the assurance of your forgiveness? in the confidence, that your sins are blotted out through the blood of Christ? that God regards you as *dear children*; loves you as such, deals with you as such, graciously rewards you as such? And will you, for a moment, cherish an unkind, an unforgiving thought against any of *God’s dear children*? against any of your dear brethren in Christ? God forbid! If there have been strife, if there have been alienation, go and be reconciled

without delay, and then come and offer thy gift upon the altar. You cannot be accepted without love in your hearts ; ye cannot be followers of *God*, for He hath forgiven you, and you must forgive. Bear ever in remembrance the sweet-smelling sacrifice, which Christ hath offered for you, that it hath come up with acceptance before *God*, your Father—especially when you come up with the memorial thereof, in obedience to the word of your Lord, “ Do this in remembrance of Me ;” and let the ascending incense carry up your thoughts to the throne of *God*, where Christ, as your High Priest, presents Himself continually, in the assured confidence that your offering, your memorial, comes up as a sweet savour to *God* your Father.

But what does all this involve ? A life of love ; a life of righteousness ; a life of purity. The absence of all *unholiness* in thought, word, or deed, for He, who loveth you, hateth all these. Neither let *covetousness* find a place in your thoughts and heart, for your inheritance is with Christ, in glory ; and this word declares that *covetousness* is *idolatry*, and excludes from “ an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of *God*.” Ye are children of the light and of the day, and your whole character should bear the light of day, reproving by word and look all deeds of darkness, and having no fellowship with them. Forget not that ye are made partakers of the Holy Ghost. Ye are not *natural*, but *spiritual*, “ if so be that the Spirit of *God* dwelleth in you,” that ye have not grieved Him, and caused Him

to depart for a season ; if it be so, cry for His return.

“ Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers ;
Come, shed abroad the Saviour’s love,
And that shall kindle ours.”

Give *Him* free course, and His fruit shall be seen, “for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.” Ye are warned against the works of darkness, and against having fellowship with them. They are always working, but they are rife in our day ; and, as you were recently reminded, spiritual workings, both good and evil, are to be looked for in the last days. Therefore is spiritual discernment the more needful gift ; and be thankful that the Lord hath more especially bestowed this gift upon His angels, that you might be protected from evil. Abide close under the shadow of their wings.

This leads us to what is contained in the Gospel of the day, our meditation on which is calculated to convince us of the working of Satan in *all ages* ; a truth, if not denied (as it is by many), is much forgotten, both by the church and the world. Our blessed Lord put forth His power for the casting out of a devil, who had made its possessor dumb. The unbelieving Jews ascribed this power to Satan, thereby recognizing the working of Satanic power ; and our Lord reasoned with them on this principle, that they among themselves exercised a power of casting out. I advert to this to show, that the covenant people of God, who were not cast off, lived in

the recognition of such an adversary, and of his mighty power. And if we are believers in the truth of God's word, and are not blinded through Satan's subtlety to his continual working, we shall rejoice that the *stronger Man* has come to bind him, to overcome him now in all his ways of working, when, in the exercise of faith, *His Mighty Name* is invoked against him ; and ultimately to cast him " into the bottomless pit, prepared for the devil and his angels." I say we may rejoice in this strong Man's power, and, abiding under it, be divested of fear. At the same time, walking humbly, and giving the enemy no place of entrance ; having no fellowship with any works of darkness, lest we be ensnared ; but holding to Jesus in His church, in love, and truth, and righteousness, we may unceasingly abide in the blessed hope of beholding our Lord's return to gather His first-fruits—then His harvest—to establish His kingdom, and reign King of kings and Lord of lords. May we be found of that *first* company, who shall enter into His presence and abide with Him for ever.

Eph. v., 1-14; Luke xi., 14-23.

THE last stage in the experience of the church on earth, the period immediately preceding the eternal separation between the followers of the Lord and the followers of the evil one, the children of light and the

children of disobedience, is that represented in the apocalypse under the symbol or type of the church in Laodicea. To this church the “Amen,” “the faithful and true Witness” saith “Thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot; so, because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” It is no good sign of the state of the church when no one is (apparently) very wicked—we may be sure that it is a time, when no one is very good. The outward reformation of manners, the making clean of the outside of the cup and of the platter, the sweeping and garnishing of the house, when within there is no presence of the Lord in the power and glory of the Holy Ghost, is hypocrisy, which is more abhorrent to the Lord, if it be possible, than the shamelessness even of flagrant sin. There is more hope of the publican and the sinner than of the self-satisfied Pharisee. The one may be aroused, and quickened from the death of sin; the other can hardly be awakened from the dream of self-righteousness. The one if he *hear* the call of the Lord, will beat upon his breast and cry for mercy; the other will wait upon the steps of the Lord, and observe His ways, and witness His miracles, and all the while, having no faith nor desire for advancement, will murmur in his heart “This man casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils.” Darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the nations, when the Lord, the light of life, came and shone into the world, manifesting in His own face the light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. With the finger of God, the Spirit of God, as

Matthew records the word, He cast out Satan. He that is stronger than all, laid hold of the strong one, He bound him, He entered into this world of ours, in which Satan had taken up his abode, He deprived him of his prey, even of all those who will hearken and obey the Gospel. The house is swept and garnished, where is the impediment? why should not the house be filled with the glory of the Lord? surely the heavenly Comforter, the Holy Ghost longs to dwell therein. Alas! it is not only swept and garnished, but, as Matthew records the words of Christ, it is empty. Let us speak of this world of ours under another aspect; *Christendom* has been swept and garnished; the Roman Empire, the northern nations, the kingdoms which had become Christian by profession have even now been swept with the besom of revolution; recovering from the scourge, they have reformed their laws and governments; their codes are based on the most scientific principles of advance in public morality. Among certain classes there is great profession of advance in private morals, and a general regard to religion; and all this consists with a growing dissolution of the ties which bind men together; a rapid increase of wickedness and immorality in the general mass; and of infidelity among those of mental activity in all ranks of life. The house is ready for the reception of antichrist. It is empty, swept and garnished. In great mercy therefore, the Lord has come among us, and appearing in the power of His Spirit, He has shown us that religion is not a matter of profession, a matter of more or less, a matter of decency or outward ob-

servances, but that it is all or nothing—it is life or death. “ He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.” He hath come among us by His Holy Spirit; He is present, and speaks and acts once more in His church. Blessed are they that recognize His voice, and acknowledge His ministers that do His will. Woe be to those that say, “ He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils,” that say, “ These men that come in the name of the Lord speak the thing that is right, they maintain the truth of God, but they are deluded men, deceived of Satan through the vanity of their hearts.” May God arrest them even yet in their progress to the unpardonable sin, and save them from that last state of Christendom, which shall be worse than the first, ere yet the nations had professed the Christian faith. The presence of the Lord by the Holy Ghost, brings us out of the region of religious speculation and profession into that of reality. We are brought to a crisis, wherein we must take our part. If that part be with the children of light, we must walk as children of light, as followers of God—in love, even in such love as Christ hath shown to us in giving Himself an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour. We must be self-devoted, wholly consecrated to our God, abstaining from the works of darkness, and among these, (let us especially note) from covetousness, which is idolatry; we must be found abounding in the fruit of the Spirit, which is goodness, righteousness, and truth; so shall the Holy Ghost, whose gift ye have received, dwell in you in all

fulness of grace and power; and Satan, when he shall seek an entrance, shall find your spirit occupied and indwelt of the Heavenly Guest. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

Gal. iv., 21; John vi., 1-14.

WE belong to a state, a community, a condition, which has its root, its origin in heaven ; a city, of which God is the builder and maker, which is not of this earth. Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all is free ; comes down from heaven, belongs not to earth. It is *the* city of the great king—God is in the midst of her. The church of God is not earthly, nor of the earth. The life we possess as members of this community is not earthly. It cannot be imparted or handed down from parent to child ; it cannot be maintained, supported or defended by earthly means. The food given for the support and nourishment of this life is not earthly. The means employed for its being imparted and supported are utterly inefficient of themselves. Bread and wine do not nourish it. Water cannot give the Holy Ghost. Death does not touch it. It never enters the grave. This life is not flesh and blood. Nevertheless we are on this earth, and we are of this earth. And we are baptized with water ; we consecrate and partake of bread and wine ; we have an outward and visible place of worship ; we have forms and ceremonies ; we die ; men speak to us,

and we speak to God. Surely there is an outward and visible thing. Else what mean all these outward and visible things? The Jews had outward forms and ceremonies, and a building, and a ritual, and laws; so have we. What is then the difference? Is it a mere difference of mode and form, and fashion? Are we only Christianized Jews? with improvements, and emendations, and advancements on their infantine society and condition? What is the difference between a Jew and a Christian? Is there, after all, any very great difference? They believed in God—so do we. They were highly favoured of God, taught of God, preserved and provided for by God; so are we. They looked for and waited for the coming of the Just One, so do we. They had the oracles of God, so have we. They will have their place in the kingdom, so shall we. Nay, further, the Lord came to them, was one of them, chose His twelve from them, and by them will bless the world. Are we better than they? It was very difficult for a Jew to think he could receive a higher thing than Jewish privileges. The believing Jew was ever tempted to return to Jewish elements, and Gentile converts even were tempted to bring in or to return to Jewish ordinances. Christians desired to be under the law. The church has ever returned to earthly and beggarly elements, content to be an earthly thing, to remain on the earth, to be an institution belonging to earth, to go on, generation after generation, filling up the gaps and losses caused by death, and content it should be so. What is the cure for all this? The answer is “Jerusalem, which is from above, which is the mother of us, is

free." We are freed men, freed from Jewish ceremonies and rites, because we have the reality ; free from shadows and symbols, having the substance ; freed from sin, because Christ has made us free ; freed from death, because Christ is risen ; freed from condemnation, because Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law ; free to serve and please God ; free to draw near and plead with God, and pour out all our wants and sorrows ; free from cankering care, and worldly sorrow, which worketh death, for God is our Father. Our citizenship is in heaven. Our life is *there*, our Head is *there*. Now, under the veil of earthly things, of sacraments and ordinances, we have communion with Him ; He, though invisible, is invisibly present. But, by-and-bye we shall behold Him. And then, freed from the earthly condition of soul and body, we shall be like Him, and see Him as He is, changed from glory to glory, by the spirit of the Lord, which is freely given us. This is our calling, for this we wait. God is faithful, who has called us, and also will do it. Now, we are passing through the wilderness ; it is the time when the flesh lusteth against the spirit ; when the earthly is not in unison with the heavenly ; we have daily, hourly, to refuse the earthly, to fight against it, to suffer from it ; and this in the assured hope of attaining unto the heavenly. Now, in the wilderness He, the Lord, gives us by faith, seeing Him that is invisible, to eat the bread that cometh down from heaven. Therefore, draw near unto His table and eat.

Gal. iv., 21; John vi., 14.

EAR brethren, we have again to remark that the events which transpired, and are recorded in the old testament scriptures, are typical of those which should thereafter have place in the course of the development of God's gracious purposes towards the children of men, and which are chiefly brought about through the instrumentality of Christ and His church.

Abraham had two sons—one by a *bond*-woman—the other by a *free*-woman. One after the flesh—the other by promise. These, the apostle teaches us in this Epistle, are typical of the two covenants, the covenant of the law given on mount Sinai, the covenant of the Gospel given through Christ—answering to the Jerusalem on earth, a bondage condition, and the Jerusalem above, *free* and the mother of us all, of the children of Christ, born from above. The Galatian church were not duly appreciating their liberty in Christ and pressing on to perfection; but were going back to the flesh; returning into the bondage, from which they had been delivered. The same truth is briefly expressed by the *flesh* and the *spirit*, which are contrary the one to the other. The one is *bondage*, the other is *liberty*. The sin of the Galatians has found a place in the church in all subsequent generations; it worketh now. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.”

Every member of Christ, in whom life has been kindled, is conscious of the strife. The apostle Paul himself knew it; he says “to will is present with me, but how to perform I know not; when I would do good, evil is present with me,” and so it is with us all. If we begin the day, as I trust we are wont to do, with God, and in the strength of the Lord, purpose to walk with God *all* the day, how soon do we find, when we come down from the height of communion with God and mingle with the world, that the flesh finds room to work, and almost prevails to quench that blessed working of the Spirit, which we had tasted at the beginning. Even on the Lord’s day—the blessed day of rest from worldly duty and care—how hard is it to abide in the Spirit throughout the day! what need of watchfulness! what need of the sustaining power of the Holy Ghost to enable us to walk in faith, and to worship God in Spirit and in truth! But, brethren, while duly humbled under a sense of our weakness and sinfulness, be not unduly cast down because of this daily conflict, which you have to endure. It is to a certain degree the unavoidable consequence of your present condition. You tabernacle in fallen flesh—in a body prone to evil—in a temptable nature, and exposed to the powerful assaults of a spiritual adversary, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour. But what of all this? You are children of the freewoman. Born of the Jerusalem above, made free through union with Christ, who hath gotten the victory over every adversary, over the world, the flesh and the devil, not for Himself only, but for all His body, and in

Him you stand. Take then to yourselves the exhortation of the apostle following on his exposition of these two covenants and conditions. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made you free." Realize to yourselves your standing in Christ, know that you are indwelt of God the Holy Ghost. And let Him have free course in you. Shun everything that would grieve the Holy Spirit, that would quench the Holy Spirit, that would give pain to your blessed Lord, who hath done and suffered so much for you. Seek to set about every duty small or great in the strength of the Lord, in the spirit of the fear of the Lord, with a desire to please Him ; and doubt not that He will give you strength to overcome, and to be crowned with Him. See the wondrous exercise of His power, as recorded in the Gospel in feeding a multitude with five barley loaves and two small fishes, filling twelve baskets with the fragments.

Jesus has by His power provided spiritual food for the multitude, which have followed Him through past generations, and He hath now, in the end of the dispensation, filled twelve baskets out of the spiritual life which remained. He hath given again the twelve-fold apostleship, and with them the earnest of the abundance of spiritual food for this generation. See *Him* in the fulness of His ordinances, and receive at the hands of His disciples the bread of life and wine of salvation, which He giveth for your sustenance, and for your preparation to meet Him with joy.

FIFTH SUNDAY IN QUADRAGESIMA.

Heb. ix., 11-15; Luke iv., 13-22.

IN the confession, at the service of the holy eucharist, we confess "we have profaned Thy holy sanctuary." Do we consider and know the depth of what we are saying? In the 16th chapter of Leviticus, wherein the services of the day of atonement for the sins of the congregation of the children of Israel are written for our learning (and from which we learn, because it was the type and shadow of the realities, which we have just been reading in the Epistle), we read that the high priest, after slaying the bullock and the ram of the sin-offering, which he offered for the sins of himself and of the priesthood, and for the sins of the people, not only sprinkled the blood within the veil, in the presence of God, upon and before the mercy seat, but also upon the altar, which was before the Lord, and so made an atonement for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and for the tabernacle, and for the altar. "And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel." The mind naturally starts at this, and inquires, "What can

this mean? I can understand how the high priest should make an atonement for his own and his sons' sins, and for the sins of the whole congregation, for they have sinned against the Lord, and defiled themselves; but the most holy place and the holy place and the altar, they surely are holy, and would not be defiled and could not need any atonement and reconciliation to be made for them. But these scriptures show us otherwise. The sinful acts of the priests and of the congregation somehow defiled the holy places, the places that they had access to, and wherein and whereon they officiated, and the things they touched and handled, were defiled, in the sight of God, by that contact. It might be said, that the people had no access within the holy places; but they virtually had, for the priests, the Levites, were taken instead of the firstborn of every house, and the people appeared before the Lord, in His holy places, in their priests, who represented them; and it appears that their presence there defiled the holy things, so as to render them unfit to be used by the Lord, and was sufficient to cause Him to forsake them. What a terrible and malignant thing sin must be, to be able thus to defile holy places and holy things dedicated to God and His service, they themselves being incapable of sin. In the 2nd chapter of Haggai, it is said: "If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No. If any one that is unclean, by having touched a dead body, touch any of these, shall it be

unclean? And the priests answered, It shall be unclean." This throws some light on the meaning of the sins of the children of Israel and of the priests defiling the holy places and things. Now, brethren, the question then comes to us, and a serious and solemn question it is,—can man, can we, by our sins, defile not only the holy buildings and the holy things we handle here, and the altar of God and the things thereon, but can man defile the heavenly places and heavenly things themselves? If the antitype answer to the type, as answer it must, then we can. And, moreover—Paul says in this chapter, that it can be done, for he says: "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these, (that is, the blood of bullocks, goats, &c.) but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these, for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself." Somehow, the sin of man had defiled the very heavens. The heavens are not clean in His sight, says Job. Paul says the same thing in the 1st chapter of the epistle to the Colossians. "Having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him, to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in *heaven*." Man's worship must be in spirit and in truth, and by that worship we ascend up into the holy of holies, and into the holy places in the heavens. We have access not only to holy places and holy things here below, the image of holy things and holy places which are above—and it is a terrible thing to think that by our sins we

can defile the holy places here, and much more terrible to think that we can defile those which are above. What mercy then is there on the part of God, that He has provided a sacrifice, a High Priest, and a blood, a better blood than that of bulls and goats, to sprinkle upon and before the mercy-seat in heaven, and on the holy places there, and on the holy altar there, and which is also sprinkled upon all holy places and all holy things here. What business should we have here this day, ministering before God, worshipping Him, and ascending in spirit up into the real holy places in heaven, of which these here are the image? How dare we be doing these things this day, but because the holy places and holy things are purged by the blood of Christ from all our defilement? They are clean to us and before God, by the sprinkling of that precious blood. We are clean as to our consciences, not because we are without sin, but because of the sprinkling of the blood upon them; and the holy places in heaven and earth, and the holy things, are clean to us, not because we do not defile them, but because of the sprinkling of the blood upon them. Whenever we assemble for worship, we should remember these things, but especially now we draw near to that solemn day, when we again keep a memorial before God of the real day of atonement. Let us indeed be afflicted that we, priests and congregation, defile the holy places in the heavens; for the people on the day of atonement congregated round the tabernacle, afflicting their souls because of their defilements of God's holy things, although they knew there was an

atonement made and making, which purged all those sins and defilements away. So let us be afflicted for whatsoever we defile the heavens by, and who can tell *to what extent we do so*, even by our very wandering thoughts in worship, and cold-hearted prayer and song. But be at peace, for there is an atonement for it all, and a blood of sprinkling that reconcileth all, that cleanseth all from all our defilements. And we offer the memorial of it unto our God, for it is our only hope, our only plea for being here to-day, and for offering holy things in holy places here to-day.

Heb. ix., 11-15; Luke iv, 13-22.

DEAR brethren, we have been often reminded of the harmony subsisting between the old and new testament scriptures, how the sacrifices and predictions recorded in the one, find their fulfilment and accomplishment in the other. We have a strong corroborative proof of this in the portion of holy scripture selected for the Epistle and Gospel of this day.

When our Blessed Lord returned from the wilderness, where He had defeated the manifold temptations of the devil, and had come to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, He went, as was His custom, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read, and there was delivered unto Him the book of the

prophet Esaias, and He read therein, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor—He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted—to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind—to set at liberty them that are bruised—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and having closed the book and sat down, He began to say, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."

Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and desired to look into the things of which they spake but could not, but their word was true, and must sooner or later have its fulfilment. And here we have preserved to us the blessed mission of Christ, as predicted by the holy prophet Isaiah, and declared by Christ Himself. "*This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.*"

Let us glance a little at the character of that mission. He was *anointed* for this work—can we pass by the truth, that is contained in this declaration, that none are qualified to preach the Gospel of Christ but those who are sent of Him and anointed for their work? If the Son of God Himself avowed, that He was thus qualified to do the work, how much more must all His servants need to be thus prepared? Let none go forth in their own strength, or of their own will, without the authority and blessing of Christ in His church.

But what a blessed mission it was, that was then fulfilling—let us glance at it—"To preach the Gospel to the *poor*." *Poor* may have several significations, but primarily it applies to those, whose outward condition of dependence

throws them upon God for help. To these especially Christ comes *first* to preach the Gospel of the kingdom, to hold out to them the blessed hope of a glorious inheritance, when they shall have done with the oppression of the world, and having based their hope on Christ shall be partakers of His glory. This first object of His mission seems to give an almost enviable place to the *poor*, as being especially the object of His grace and mercy, sealed, as it were, by the first words of His sermon on the mount, “Blessed are the *poor in spirit* for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” This amplifies and enlarges the term *poor*, and while it teaches the poor in condition in what spirit of humility they should ever abide, “Blessed are the poor in spirit,” it enlarges it to the embracing of all, who walk humbly before God. Again our Lord said, “The poor ye have always with you,” and He regards kindness shown to them as done to Himself. Let us take comfort in the thought, that many of the gatherings under apostles are principally of the *poor*. Let us rejoice over them in the assurance that they are gathered of the Lord, and delight to minister to them of the abundance of His grace, that they may indeed be *poor in spirit*, trusting in the Lord.

“To heal the broken-hearted.” There are many troubles in life, many sorrows, many cares, but no condition seems to come up to that, which this expression conveys—a *broken heart*. And is there a remedy for this? Yea, there is; this is one end for which Jesus has come—to heal the broken-hearted. He took upon Him our nature, that He might be able to sympathize with the

suffering condition of humanity, and that not an ineffectual sympathy, such as is often ours with our brethren, but with a commission and power to deliver. What can so effectually portray this malady, *a broken heart*, as a widow following her only son to the tomb? Jesus meets such a one, stops the bier, brings life back to the son, and restores him to his mother; is not this healing the broken-hearted? "Giving deliverance to the captives, sight to the blind, setting at liberty the bruised," all these might be illustrated in like manner. He will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed; let the *feeble desire* after Christ be encouraged, the wounded in spirit be comforted; He is at hand to meet every case, cast all your burdens upon Him, and know that *this day, this year*, is the acceptable time of the Lord, the time from His coming into our nature till the time of His return from His Father in glory. Let the Gospel sound the good news of salvation through His blood, the assurance of His abiding presence by the Holy Ghost, the hope of eternal blessedness in His presence, whose love is ever flowing forth, and will ever flow.

SUNDAY BEFORE EASTER.

Phil. ii., 5-11; Matt. xxi., 1-17.

DEAR brethren, the wonderful theme of the incarnation of the Son of God is presented to us in the Epistle of this day; who can adequately comprehend or appreciate this wonderful mystery? That He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, should stoop so low as to become very man! It was a *voluntary* humiliation. It was with the *concurrence* of God the Father, but not by *compulsion*. *He made Himself* of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant. Wonderful is the way of its accomplishment, God the Holy Ghost, the third person in the blessed Trinity, working out the will of God the Father and God the Son. His overshadowing a virgin of Israel caused that that holy thing, that should be born of her, should be called the Son of God. He despised not the virgin's womb. He took flesh, our very flesh in the condition that He found it, no new creation, the flesh of a daughter of Israel, born as other women to whom simplicity of faith and meek obedience was given, and the honour put upon her, that she should become the mother of the Lord. Blessed virgin Mary—we rejoice to

call her blessed, and all generations shall call her blessed, through the ages, that roll on for ever ; but we worship her not. We worship her child, the Son of God, the Incarnate Word, the Life, the Eternal Life which was then manifested. We worship the Holy Child Jesus. We present to Him our gold and frankincense and myrrh. We hail Him as our Saviour, our Lord and King, and, moved thereto by the Holy Ghost, we would yield to Him a loving and entire obedience, an unreserved dedication of ourselves to His service. We proclaim Him Lord of all, to whom it is the will of God, that every knee should bow and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. If we should keep silence, the stones would cry out. Passing by the days of His childhood, in which He stands as so bright an example for every child, yielding obedience to parental authority, and growing in favour with God and man, we find him grown to manhood, fulfilling His earthly ministry, yet in all humility, and though King and Lord of all, riding upon a colt, the foal of an ass, in His approach to that city, which was then to be the scene of His suffering, and in which we believe He will manifest His glory. We would penetrate with the eye of faith the dark cloud of His humanity and the low estate of His militant church. We would strew our palm branches by the way and join the Hosannas to the Son of David, exclaiming, “Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.” We have a clearer light to walk in, than the multitude and the babes and sucklings of that day. We trace His

path to Calvary, we look upon the cross, on which He expiated the sin of the world and fulfilled that work of redemption, which He had voluntarily undertaken to accomplish. The season through which we are passing brings this phase of His human history fresh before us, and as though He would sadden our spirits at such a season, it Has pleased Him to permit to be taken from us a beloved brother, whom by the Holy Ghost He had used as a channel of much glorious light, and set as a pillar in the house of God. He has gone to his rest in peace, much peace, through faith in that blood, in which alone we can all find peace. He shall stand in his place in *that* day, when his Lord's resurrection power shall be put forth, and they that sleep and they that wake shall be caught up together to meet their Lord. May he rest in that hope and yet help us to hasten the day !

But let us not pass by the exhortation with which the Epistle begins. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." That is the full and entire renunciation of ourselves, in order that we may do and suffer the will of God. The example is far indeed beyond our reach ; we have no power to lay aside a heavenly standing to stoop to earth, but we are called to have the *mind* of Christ, the will to forego and abandon whatsoever we have, to follow the Lord ; to take up His cross and follow Him. This was what the apostle meant to express, when he was willing to be accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren. The following Christ fully is no easy thing. Our standard as bearing His name is, and has been, very low. Few of us have been put to the test in

the way that some of our forefathers were, who not only forsook all for Christ, but willingly met death in His cause. We know not yet to what we may be called, but let us see that we have the *mind* of Christ in this *negation* of self; not forgetting that the cross leads the way to the crown, and though death may overtake us in the path, the gates of death are unbarred, Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, and our life, being hid with Him, shall be made manifest in the day of His glory.

Phil. ii., 5-11; Matt. xxi., 1-17.

THE prophet of old called upon the daughter of Zion to rejoice exceedingly, saying, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee—He is just, having salvation—lowly, riding upon an ass and a colt the foal of an ass." And this prophecy was fulfilled in the manner recorded in the gospel for the day. Who is lowly as He, this Son of David? This King of Israel? Who so full of human sympathies and of tender regard for His own flesh and blood? Who so condescending, and so merciful—judging no man—condemning no man—stretching out a helping hand to all, that were in need of help—preaching righteousness and yet showing mercy—without a home or resting place on earth, and yet giving rest to all, who came to Him—relieving all who were heavy burdened—providing for them a habitation, a kingdom that cannot be moved—a house eternal in the heavens? Such was

the conduct and character of Him who, as on this day, on the eve of that heavy trial and temptation, that hour of sorrowfulness unto death, which he was about to encounter, draining to the dregs the cup of bitterness, made His entry into Jerusalem, His own royal city, not in royal apparel—not with any show of outward pomp, but with downcast look and lowly mien, riding upon an ass and an ass's foal. Truly this was a spectacle for men and angels to wonder at. Here was a man, who went about doing good—healing all that were oppressed of the devil—raising the dead, and proclaiming the nearness of the kingdom of heaven, who yet was hunted about as a wild beast, and persecuted by those who held the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But now the power of truth prevailed—His fame had been noised abroad—the miracles He had done had wrought up the people to a pitch of enthusiasm. 'They heard that Jesus was about to come into Jerusalem, and they went out to meet Him, and they greeted Him with the words, with which the coming of the promised Messiah should be welcomed—"Hosanna to the Son of David, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." This greeting was the tribute paid to the Man, not in consequence of any efforts of His to proclaim Himself, but because of His wonderful works, which became known in spite of Him, for the more He sought to hide Himself, so much the more His fame was noised abroad. And now the time was come for Him to receive the homage of the people. In spite of the anger and jealousy of the scribes and Pharisees—of the chief priests and the rulers of the

synagogue, the people were constrained to greet Him as their King, the promised Saviour, and so mighty was the impulse, that the little children shouted—the mouths of babes and sucklings were opened—and if these had held their peace, the very stones would have cried out. All Jerusalem was moved at His approach, and they said, Who is this? who is this, whom the people are receiving with shouts of triumph, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David, the King who cometh in the name of the Lord? This is He, who gave sight to the man born blind—who restored life to the son of the poor widow—who raised up Lazarus from the dead. This is He in whom those words of the prophet are fulfilled, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor—He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted—to preach deliverance to the captives—recovering of sight to the blind—to set at liberty them that are bruised—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” And all the people shouted, Hosanna to the Son of David.

This, however, was but a momentary triumph—but as the last flicker of the expiring lamp. He was about to enter upon His last agony—He had put off the form of God in His incarnation—He had made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and being made in the likeness of a man—He was now about to undergo the marring even of this human form—the separating of the soul from the body by the painful death of the cross. And even as He was about, for a time, to disappear, and to go down into the grave, so also the works of the Man of Sorrows were

transitory. The eyes, that by Him had been opened to see the light of this world, were to be closed in the darkness of death. Lazarus was again to return to the grave, from which he had come forth at the bidding of Him, who is the resurrection and the life. Death, the last enemy, was still unsubdued. The short triumph of the Man of Sorrows was but the prelude to His death. They, who saw Him enter into Jerusalem and heard the shoutings, Hosanna to the Son of David, were within one short week to behold Him nailed to the cross, and hear the mockers saying, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save."

Dearly beloved, we know Christ no longer after the flesh. His works done on the earth were, are to us, an earnest of higher, greater works, which the Son of David exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, seated on the Father's throne, is doing by His church, and will make manifest at His second and glorious appearing. When He comes a second time, those words will receive a higher and more lasting fulfilment: the Lord hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor—to heal the broken-hearted—to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of the sight to the blind—to set at liberty them that are bruised—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. We know Him as the Exalted one—the mighty God and Saviour, who is about to enter into the holy city, not again in lowliness, but in power and great glory. And in anticipation and hope of this His second coming in glory, we shout Hosanna—blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord—Hosanna in the

highest. And having before us this hope and expectation, we seek to have the same mind in us, which was also in Him—we are prepared to endure the cross—to despise the shame—and to celebrate His sufferings, as partakers now, for a time, with Him of His humiliation, that we may be sharers with Him of His glory for ever in His eternal kingdom, in that day when at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

EASTER SUNDAY.

Col. iii., 1-7; John xx., 1-10.

THIS day, this festival day, on which we are now assembled, should be an occasion of abundant rejoicing to the church of Christ. As the disciples on that day, which we now commemorate, greeted each other with these words, "He is risen," so may we now take up their word, for it contains the source of our joy, and add to it the words of the apostle, addressed to the church, yea, taking it to ourselves, "He is risen, and we are risen with Him, through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." Not risen with Him in the sense of the resurrection of our bodies, for we are still *in* our bodies, waiting for our resurrection or change—but risen with Him through faith in His resurrection, being quickened by that same Spirit that quickened Him, giving us the assurance that as He arose by the operation of God, so shall we arise by the same power working in us.

The resurrection, the resurrection of our *bodies* is a subject of great interest; it so intimately connects our present life with our future destiny, proving that we shall retain the identity of our persons and receive our place in Christ's

kingdom in some measure according with that use, which the Lord has made of us, and with our faithfulness in the fulfilment of those duties, which were required of us, whilst we dwelt in these mortal bodies. It is an article of our faith which we confess, in conjunction with the whole catholic church, past and present, in our creed, "I believe in the resurrection of the body;" and this faith, solemnly confessed by the church, supersedes the necessity of any evidence to establish its truth. Some of the baptized pass it by, by indulging in the thought, that they pass after death into a condition of spiritual perfectness, in which the body is to have no participation, the consequence of which is, that they ignore the truth of the Lord's return to the earth, to reign in and over it in conjunction with His risen saints in resurrection bodies like His own.

There is no evidence so strong as *facts*. The resurrection of our blessed Lord in a changed body, yet the same. "Behold My hands and My feet that it is I Myself," is the strong *fact*, and earnest of *our* resurrection. But if any should indulge for a moment the thought, that the resurrection of our Lord as the God Man Himself is not a sufficient warrant to us as mere men, made partakers of the divine Life, of *our* resurrection, there is evidence accompanying the resurrection of our Lord to suppress such a thought. For it is recorded in scripture (Matt. xxvii., 52), "And the graves were opened, and many *bodies of the saints*, which slept arose and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." This remarkable *fact* that other bodies,

at the time of the resurrection of our Lord, arose and were seen of many, is an unquestionable assurance, that men like ourselves have risen from their graves, as well as the Lord Himself. What became of these risen saints, these earnests to us of the resurrection of our bodies, it is in vain for us to conjecture, because it is not revealed; but we may rest assured, that the Lord has found a fit hiding-place for them till His coming again to gather His first-fruits, when *their* place will be given them. This fact associates itself with what is recorded of our Lord by the apostle Peter, "That He went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah while the ark was a preparing." From this it is plain that our Lord did a work while in the separate condition, during which He was hidden for a short time from the sight of men. He visited spirits in prison, for it was a part of His mission to set captives free; and His final victory will be seen in His overcoming death and hell, leading captivity captive, for it is the last enemy, that is to be destroyed. All must rise and appear before Him as the Judge of all; and who shall stand in that day before Him, the righteous Judge, the Searcher of the thoughts and intents of the heart? He shall then separate the righteous from the wicked, giving to the righteous, standing in the righteous One, the joy of ever abiding in His presence; and eternal banishment of all the impenitent wicked from that presence.

The false notion that some entertain, that after death

they have no more to do with their *bodies*, but become spirits or angels, or something resembling angels, arises from a false or inadequate notion of the order, which God has established in creation, and of the Incarnation of our blessed Lord. In creation one order of being is distinct from another. Angels, men, beasts, birds, fishes, all have their proper being. And though they are all linked together as coming from one source, and mutually dependent and helpful one to another, yet nothing is so contrary to the law of God as the mingling of these. Neither does God alter the creature, which He has made. Angels remain angels, man remains man, and will ever so remain.

And now we come to the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation, before which we bow in wondering admiration and praise. “For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.” Again, “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same.” No new nature was provided for the blessed virgin. But in this wonderful act He, the Son of God, hath united Himself to *man* and *man* to Him in indissoluble union. He hath redeemed *man* for His glory, and they who would become angels or spirits, changing their natures and separating themselves from their bodies, which constitute a part of their nature, would thereby separate themselves from the Man Christ Jesus, and forfeit the fulness of blessing, which comes to them through Him.

And now we are commemorating the resurrection of

our Lord. And the Epistle exhorts us, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth: for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Dead with Him—risen with Him—His death is our life. In two ways—first, by virtue of His atonement we live, secondly by our baptism into His death, and our rising up out of the water into new life. By virtue of that death we become dead to the world, the flesh, and the devil. By virtue of that life we live with Christ, be He where He may: at the right hand of the Father, in paradise, or with us invisibly at the altar. We have only to realize this *oneness*, this presence, this life in Him, to have our hearts drawn out in fervent love, in love that shall bind us so close to Him, though yet unseen, as shall make everything *hateful* to us that would grieve or be *hateful* to Him. And more than that—loving Him unseen, it shall kindle in us, that longing desire to behold Him face to face, that shall find no satisfaction in anything that doth not tend to this—that cometh short of this. This hope shall be our life, and if we sleep it shall be our pleasant dream, to be awakened out of by His blessed presence.

Col. iii., 1-7; John xx., 1-10.

“**M**Y Beloved spake unto me and said, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away, for lo ! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

This is the description, from the Song of Solomon, of the spring time, and of the joyousness which the flowers, and the singing of birds, and the coo of the turtle dove, and the bursting forth of the fruit-buds, produce in the hearts of those, who have passed through the winter, when all nature seems dead, and are able to rejoice at the return of spring, the foreshadowing in the natural kingdom of that time of joy and singing, when in the spiritual all things shall be made new, and all things shall be of God, when out of death, life shall spring up, when light shall drive away the darkness, and the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

Do not our hearts respond to this appeal, Arise, and come away ? Do we not hear in it a call to those, the blessed holy departed saints, who are gone into the land of forgetfulness, to prepare themselves to take again

their bodies, and to burst through their cerements, to leave behind the grave-clothes, and to come forth arrayed in garments of glory and beauty, even the glory and beauty of Him, who appeared on the mount of transfiguration to the chosen disciples, His face shining as the sun, and His garment white as the light; and is it not at the same time a call to us to make ourselves ready?

The lilies, as we read, toil not neither do they spin, and the fowls of the air sow not, neither do they reap, yet our heavenly Father feedeth the fowls, and clotheth the lilies of the field, so that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these, though they are as the grass, which grows up to-day and to-morrow is cut down and withered; and shall He not much more clothe and feed you? We, according to these figures, are taught to give up caring for this life what we eat, and for this body what we put on in the hope of being clothed with a body of glory, and being fed with the food of eternal life, and inheriting the kingdom and glory of Christ.

We wait, in common with those of our brethren, who have fallen asleep, for the call, "Arise and come away;" we wait and embody in our daily cry to the Lord the petition for our deliverance from the bondage of corruption into liberty and glory; and in this our cry we give expression to the longing desire of those, who have gone down into silence, who have fallen asleep, who have died in the faith, not having received the promises, who wait for the time of being made perfect not without us in the glory of the resurrection.

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart. Sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. These several passages apply to the time, when the church devotes herself to the meditation on the sufferings and death of Him, the Man of sorrows, and in her spirit, by the working in her of the Holy Ghost, she in measure enters into the fellowship of His sufferings, and is made conformable to His death ; not indeed in a carnal way, not in any endeavour to picture to herself the bodily sufferings of the crucified One, but in being led by the Spirit into such communion with Him, upon whom was laid the iniquity of us all, into such a sense of our evil estate, since we inherited death in Adam and came under the curse of disobedience, that we are constrained to cry for deliverance, to look upon Him, whom we have pierced and to mourn with a great mourning. This it is which has been the blessed experience of the past week. This is the meaning of going to the house of mourning, of entering into the sorrows of the Man of sorrows. This it is to be partakers according to our measure of the sufferings of Christ. Not that we can know anything of the depth and intensity of His suffering, of His abhorrence of sin, of His dread of death as the fulfilment of the curse. In all this He, the Eternal Son, the Holy One of God,

taking upon Him our nature, fallen, degraded, sentenced to death, and deprived of the light of God's countenance, had an experience, which none but He could know. He tasted death for every man. He could cry out with Job, and more really than Job, "I have said to corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and sister;" and of Him it is written in the Psalms, "I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people." All those so called penitential Psalms, which have been our song in the night during the last week, are the expression of the sufferings of Christ, into the fellowship of which we are invited, and by the aid of the Holy Spirit are enabled in measure to enter.

The services of Holy Week to those, who have the Spirit of Christ, are indeed a heavy burden, they make one feel bowed down, crushed, burdened, well nigh overwhelmed, sleeping for sorrow, scarcely able to watch one hour; and they should thus exercise us. It is good for us that so it should be. This is the true fast, which we are called to keep; the fast of the soul, sorrowful even unto death.

But even as the services of the Holy Week bear so heavily upon us, so much the more does the dawning of this day of the resurrection bring to us hope instead of despair, light instead of darkness, eternal life in lieu of death, and glory instead of corruption.

"Christ is risen," is the burden of the song of our hearts. This day our mouth is filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing, because our captivity is at an

end. If such is our experience of that salvation by hope, which we are now able to realise, what will be the joy unspeakable and full of glory which awaits us, when the day of the resurrection, to which Jesus Christ has attained, shall have come for us also ; for us who are alive, in common with those who sleep in Christ ! Then will be fulfilled the promise of the acceptable year of the Lord, when He shall appear again to give to them that mourn in Zion beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

God who is rich in mercy, when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. If ye then be risen with Christ, set your affections on things above. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.

Col. iii., 1-7; John xx., 1-10.

DURING the past week we have meditated on, and we have recited before and unto God, the trials, the sorrows, the sufferings, the agony of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. It is well to do so ; these scenes, these events are not forgotten in heaven ; should they be forgotten on earth ? It is unto the Lamb, that was slain, that every creature which is in heaven, and on the

earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, ascribe “blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever.” Jesus has hearkened unto and received, nay, with reverence be it said, has taken part and rejoiced in the recounting and commemoration of His sufferings, which the church has made unto God. *It is His joy.* That commemoration, made by His church, He presents ever as His own unto God. Truly the recounting of, and calling to mind of these scenes, is like stepping back into the night. Truly it is taking the part and place of mourners. Who can think of, speak of, recount the things done at Gethsemane and Calvary, and not mourn? The badge of mourning suits the ministering servants at such times. The altar is well denuded, when the entrance into the grave, and the lying in the grave of Him, who sanctifieth the altar, is commemorated. It is good to go to the house of mourning; it is well to have gone to the grave. But, blessed be God, “weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” And now the morning dawns, Christ is risen, Hallelujah! Christ is risen indeed! He dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him, now we can sing, He was dead, but liveth for evermore.

Brethren, have we seen our sin in the death of the Lord? Have we felt, as it were, shame and remorse in thinking His stripes brought us healing? Have we entered into the tomb to behold and adore our Substitute, our Victim, our Sin-bearer? Well, now let us rejoice. He is risen! Death hath no more dominion over Him. Let us be

partakers of His joy—the joy set before Him, for which He endured the cross—despising the shame; let us likewise come up from the grave. There our sins are buried; there our life is declared unprofitable and is sacrificed. We are risen with Him; we may not any more stay at the grave. We must walk in newness of life; our old man is “crucified with Christ.” Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but “alive unto God.” Oh, blessed and glorious day, which this day commemorates. Christ is risen indeed! Death could not hold Him; the sin of the world, laid on Him, could not keep Him in the grave; Satan and hell could not hold back His disembodied spirit from His uncorrupted body. He *is* risen; therefore, blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord. “Yea,” saith the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.” And blessed are they, that are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, to be caught up, without death, to this meeting.

Christ is the First-fruits of them that sleep. Christ is the resurrection and the life. We have received of His life, therefore we shall be partakers of His resurrection. Christ was the first to rise. Had He not risen, none could ever rise; but now he, that had the power of death is vanquished, therefore we can attain unto the resurrection. From Him, the risen One, we have received a new life in our spirits, by virtue of which we put into the grave of Jesus, and bury with Him, our Adam nature, our corrupt nature; we confess it to be unprofitable, and renounce it; we acknowledge the “minding

of the flesh" to be death. From Him, risen, we receive grace to look for and attain unto the resurrection. The dead in Christ rise first, and we which are left alive and remain unto the day of His appearing, and look for Him, shall be caught up to meet Him. The resurrection of Christ is God's acceptance of His sacrifice for our sins. Blessed be God. The resurrection of Christ is the source and spring of our new life, given in baptism, nourished at His table. Blessed be God. The resurrection of Christ is our assurance, that we shall rise or be changed into the same image, and be like Him, and be with Him. Blessed be God. Rejoice, then, that Christ is risen indeed, for your sins are forgiven. Rejoice that Christ is risen, and walk in newness of life. Rejoice that Christ is risen, and hope, and wait, and expect to be gathered unto Him, and so ever to be with Him. The same mighty operation of God, which He wrought in Christ, in raising Him from the dead, has been exercised towards you, in raising you from the death of sin unto spiritual life and oneness with Christ. And He, that raised Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit, which dwelleth in you. Draw near unto His altar to praise Him. Draw near unto His table to be nourished and strengthened unto eternal life. Glory in His Holy Name. Let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

I John v., 4-12; John xx., 19-23.

TWO events of surpassing interest are recorded in this day's Gospel. Only a few hours had elapsed since the report had been spread, that Christ was risen from the dead. The disciples had no doubt been much exercised during these few hours, recalling to mind the words He had spoken to them respecting His sufferings, and death, and rising again on the third day. A message had reached them through Mary Magdalene, that He would go before them into Galilee, and would meet them there. They gathered together accordingly in the evening of that great day, and were assembled in a room with closed doors, when suddenly the Lord stood in the midst of them and said, "Peace be unto you," recalling to their minds His last discourse with them before He suffered, when He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid; ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father, for My Father is greater than I, and now I have told you before

it come to pass, that when it is come to pass ye may believe." Were they still in doubt whether it was He indeed? Were they filled with fear at the prospect of beholding Him? or were they burning with desire to see Him again? With strangely mingled feelings of doubt and of hope they must have looked forward to this interview, and lo! there He was among them saying "Peace be unto you." Were they to assume, that His appearance among them, when the doors were closed, was a sign that His body, raised from the dead, was now become independent of those laws affecting matter, to which our bodies are subject in our present state of existence? Or were they to conclude that the body, which He now had, was not the same body, which had hung upon the cross? Is this an angel or a spirit? Is it a man with flesh and bones? Doubtless these thoughts were uppermost in their hearts, but they were left in no manner of doubt on these questions, for He immediately proceeded to say (as we read in St. Luke) "Why are ye troubled and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have," and He showed them His hands and His side. He also eat before them, and then they believed and were glad. He is truly risen; the body, which passed down into the grave, is raised again from the dead, and it is now so endowed, that the natural laws of our earthly existence affect it no more. It is He Himself. This is the first event contained in the Gospel. The other event recorded as having taken place at the same time is, that after again saying unto them, "Peace

be unto you," He gave them their mission. "As my Father sent me, even so send I you," and breathing on them, He said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them, and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

The two important truths established by this interview are indeed the very root and basis of the Gospel. Christ is indeed risen from the dead, not as a spirit, but as a living man in the body, having flesh and bones, eating and drinking, still partaking of that humanity wherewith we are clothed, however endowed with powers surpassing those which our body in its present state is endowed with. He has no other or different body from ours. However freed from those limitations, which chain us down to the earth, from those accidents, which make us sensible to pain and sickness and suffering and death, it is still the same body, and His resurrection in the body is the assurance to us, that our resurrection bodies will be the same, which we put off, when we come under the curse of death and receive the wages of sin. Satan has not destroyed God's creature, he has not prevailed to mar, except for a time, God's image in us. Death is but a creature, which shall itself finally be destroyed. There is a resurrection, for Christ is risen. They who fall asleep will rise again with their bodies, for Christ has risen with His body and when we see Him we shall behold Him, a Man, our Brother, and we who are alive and remain in the body shall pass into the resurrection state without seeing death. Let us see that our faith in the resurrection is a reality.

The second truth which presents itself to us is

the power of the Son of man on earth to forgive sins. Nothing can be more clear than His words, "as My Father has sent Me, even so send I you." The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sin, and now He has ascended to the Father, that power is still exercised by Him through those whom He appoints. In our Gospel of to-day are found the mission and the endowment. "As My Father sent Me, even so send I you," and as My ministry was in the power of the Holy Ghost, even so I give you the Holy Ghost, in order that in the power of the Holy Ghost ye may remit sins and retain them. What is that ministry of reconciliation, which is committed to the church, if it include not the power to forgive sin? Sin is the great barrier between man and his God. Death is not in itself the great evil to which man is exposed. The sting of death is sin. If our sins are blotted out, we can meet death without fear, and say with our last breath, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Christ Himself encountered death. In hanging on the cross He was made a curse for us. He became a sin offering, but sin touched Him not, for He was the Holy one of God, and in freeing us from sin He has taken away the sting of death. Beloved, I need do no more than encourage you to meditate on these the fundamental truths of the Gospel, in order that in the holy eucharist, while commemorating the death of Christ, you may remember that one sacrifice offered once for all for the sins of the whole world and come to God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus beholding the

Man Christ Jesus raised from the dead, and having power on earth to forgive sin, we may say with the apostle, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who ever liveth to make intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

1 John v., 4-12; John xx., 19-29.

THREE are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one: the substance of their testimony amounts to one and the same thing. The author of this testimony is God. The person concerning whom God testifies, is His Son. The substance of their testimony is, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The practical conclusion to be drawn from this testimony is, that he,

who has the Son, has eternal life, and conversely, that he, who has not the Son, has not life.

John, from whose Epistle these words are taken, tells us in his Gospel, in the account which he gives of the passion and death of our blessed Lord, that when at the request of the Jews, Pilate had sent the soldiers to break the legs of the three, who had been crucified—a cruel practice like breaking on the wheel, insuring their ultimate death after prolonged torture—the soldiers found that Jesus was already dead, therefore they brake not His legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water. John adds: “And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.” The explanation of this fact on physiological principles is comparatively of little importance. John regards it as a symbol of higher truths; he relates it as a guarantee to the disciples of that, which they ought to believe concerning Christ. Therefore he places such emphasis on his own testimony, and now in the Epistle he applies it as the symbol of God’s testimony concerning His Son. This is He that came by water and blood, not by water only, but by water and blood. This is the Son of God, who came not after a spiritual manner only, who is not God under the mere appearance of a man, but this is He, who being God became very man. This is He, who being God, has brought eternal life into *man’s* nature through becoming and abiding very man. This is not one, who suffered only in appearance, but He took flesh and blood, mortal flesh, and became a true soulish or

animated man, and He shed His blood and He breathed out His soul from a body, which passed under the power of death. He is God ; that admits of no question. He brought eternal life to man ; that is most certain. No one could take away the life of His body, except He Himself should lay it down. Nevertheless, He laid it down ; He did shed forth His most precious blood, and by His blood He has redeemed us. He came not by water only, but by water and blood, and those, who believe in Him crucified and slain, shall not perish but have everlasting life. He came therefore, to die for our sins and to rise for our justification ; and those, who are baptized into Him their sins are washed away in the fountain of that blood, and through His power by the Holy Ghost they are made partakers of that divine and eternal life. They receive the pardon and the eternal life, of which the stream of blood and water, which flowed from His pierced side, are the symbols and signs, and the life, which they thus receive, is ever nourished from His own living flesh and blood.

Therefore is it, that holy baptism is the sign and symbol both of pardon and of life, and the precious sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord is the sign and symbol of renewed pardon and invigorated life. And they, who not only receive the sacrament, but show forth the grace of baptism, and who not only receive the sacrament, but show forth the grace of our communion in the Lord, do become living witnesses, by whom and in whom the record of the water and the blood is continually manifested and declared.

And there is a third witness. "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ ; not by water only, but by water and blood, and it is Spirit that witnesseth, because the Spirit is the truth." The Spirit is indeed emphatically the witness-bearer, for He is the energy and power, that breathes through all and makes the threefold witness to be a living witness. The pardon, that we receive through faith in the blood, is a pardon which purifies our conscience *by the Holy Ghost*. The life, which we receive in baptism, the nourishment we receive in the sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord, we receive *by the Holy Ghost*, and the grace thereof manifested in our life and conversation is *by the Holy Ghost*. But the Holy Ghost has His own peculiar and personal witness to bear in us and by us, even to the demonstration in us of the power and glory of God, the glory with which God has glorified His Christ at His own right hand and with which He glorifies those that are members of the mystical body of Christ. To this peculiar and personal witness also the Lord testifies by an ordinance, even by the laying on of the hands of those, whom He sends forth from Himself.

These truths are illustrated by the narrative in the Gospel. Jesus had shed His precious blood and died for us ; He had risen from the grave by the Holy Ghost in the power of the new and eternal life. Being risen, He came to His disciples and showed to them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, that they saw the Lord. They recognized, that He had died for their sins and had risen to be their eternal life. Then

said Jesus to them again: “ Peace be unto you, as my Father hath *sent Me*, even so *send I you*, receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Thus He, that came by water and by blood, has testified through His apostles by the Holy Ghost, and this is His testimony: “ I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.” His death and His new life are the assurance of pardon and acceptance, of holiness and perfection. Therefore receive ye the Holy Ghost, the powers of the world to come. For by His resurrection we know, that the Father has given to us in His Son eternal life, and they that believe have the witness in themselves, that they are in the Son and that He is in them. “ We know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

I Peter ii., 19 ; John x., 11-16.

THE Epistle for this day is addressed to Christian servants. "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy," and so on as hath been read. Three marks are to distinguish Christian servants: First, obedience, proceeding from reverence—"Be subject to your masters with all fear." Secondly, innocence—"When ye do well." And thirdly, patience under ill-treatment, even when undeserved—"If, when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." Those who thus serve and suffer, will be thanked by God, as if they had conferred a favour upon Him, and shall obtain glory for themselves. It is the plain duty of a disobedient person to bear his punishment patiently; he is only receiving that which he has merited; he cannot expect thanks from another nor win glory to himself by his patience. But the man who has done well, and in return is treated ill, and when ill-treated avenges not himself nor resents the injury done to him, he puts especial honour upon God. He avows his faith that God is, and that He is

privy to the whole wrong, and that He will judge righteously in due time ; he allows God His prerogative of Judge and Avenger, and God will remember it to him to his honour, and thank and commend him for it. The man, who avenges himself, wins glory from men for his high spirit and intolerance of wrong and insult. He, who remits judgment unto God, shall from God receive glory for having given the true death-wound to the spirit, out of which all insult and injury proceed. This is a hard lesson to ask any man to learn, therefore the strongest considerations are used to recommend it. First, Christ was such a servant Himself. "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." "He did no sin." He failed not in duty. What He undertook He performed fully, faithfully, exactly. "Neither was guile found in His mouth." He did not first fail in duty, and then try to justify failure by deceitful speeches. This is the double sin of bad servants. First, they fail in duty, and then make lying excuses to justify or palliate their failure. The perfect Servant did neither of these things. His deed and word agreed—they were the reflection of each other. Yet after all He was reviled, He suffered ; but He avenged not Himself. He committed Himself to Him, that judgeth righteously. The Son of God came into the world to live a servant's life, and this is the example which He set, and this example He expects all servants, who bear His name, to follow. Who is sufficient for it ? His grace is sufficient. What He has commanded us to do, He can enable us to do. Let us pray to Him to perfect our faith. The first con-

sideration urged is Christ's example. The second is His atonement. We may well bear unmerited buffeting for a little while, who have been saved from eternal suffering, which our sins, which He bore for us upon the tree, deserved. The remembrance of the sins from which we have been delivered, and of the manner of the deliverance, should produce patience and meekness in suffering. Christ did not suffer merely to set us an example, but also to redeem us from a curse. Our patient suffering, even while we suffer wrongfully, although acceptable to God and glorious to ourselves, is not that which reconciles us to God, and makes atonement for us. "We are reconciled to God by the death of His Son," "Who *His own self* bare our sins in *His own body* on the tree—by *whose stripes* we are healed"—by *whose own stripes*, the stripes of *Himself*, as the heaped up language in the original expressed.

The next consideration addressed to those, who under earthly masters "do well and suffer for it," is that *they* are not their only masters. They have another Master, whose good treatment will compensate unto them all "the suffering wrongfully" which they received at the hands of the froward. "They have returned" (or rather have been turned) "to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls." He who set us the example of obedience, who bore our sins in His own body, that made atonement for them, is constituted of God Shepherd and Bishop, to watch over us and to feed us. Other rulers may be as hunters and liers in wait. He is the Good Shepherd. The God of peace hath brought again from the dead our

Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant—"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." When the flock is worried, and torn, and wounded, who shall heal them but the Shepherd? And for all the *griefs* (for in this passage the original is in the plural number) which we suffer from those who harrass and oppress, there is healing in the church through the knowledge of Christ as the "Shepherd and Bishop." He is personally the great Shepherd and Bishop, to whom every soul must personally come. But Heal so puts upon His ministers the names of shepherd and bishop, indicating that through them He would minister His pastoral care, and exercise His loving superintendance. They err, who strive to know the great Shepherd Himself without receiving those, whom He appoints as shepherds under Him; and they also are deceived and unblessed, who are satisfied with outward services performed on their behalf by the priests of God, and seek not to enter into living communion with God Himself. Ye ill-treated ones, avenge not yourselves, but commit your cause to Him, that "judgeth righteously." Ye injured ones, comfort not yourselves, but seek true healing and peace from "the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."

The Epistle for the day instructs the servants. The Gospel is the glass for masters and rulers. According to the law, the king in Israel needed to be an Israelite himself—one of the brethren. Jesus made Himself one of us, that He might be chosen to rule over us. Rulers

must consider themselves one with those whom they rule. The Great Shepherd of the sheep took upon Him the nature of the flock, and became a Lamb first to die for the flock, before He was raised up as Shepherd to guide them. It was a high commendation Peter pronounced upon the Roman slaves, when he said to them, “Ye are *turned* to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” Would that the same could be said of the labouring and suffering classes in the present day. Alas, they are turned away from Him. Many deceivers are bidding high and successfully for the poor man’s confidence. He, who alone is the poor man’s friend, is despised and rejected. If He is acknowledged at all, it is not as Shepherd and Bishop. As a surety for sinners He is in some measure accepted. As a king of saints He is refused. Men are willing to receive from Him the pardon of past sins, and a license to sin again with impunity; but righteousness and holiness, and perfection of preparation for the kingdom of God are declined and evaded. Jesus Christ is in some measure accepted as the Lamb—he is rejected as the Shepherd. As a Lamb that was slain, men will hear of Him—not as a Shepherd, who now lives and will live for ever. After the resurrection the first thing recorded of Him is, that He appeared to His apostles and “breathed on them, saying, receive ye the Holy Ghost”—not for yourselves, but “that ye may remit unto men their sins.” The next thing mentioned is, that He who was raised from the dead, was raised as the Great Shepherd of the sheep, and was set in the highest place of all, that there He

might "stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God." The Gospel of the day reveals Him to us as the "Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep"—dying upon the cross as the sacrifice of sin-offering. The Epistle points to Him as the Great Shepherd of the sheep, abiding ever to take charge and oversight of the flock of God. Jesus Christ has turned to His people in these last days as Shepherd and Bishop. He has caused to be named again in His church every name, by which His pastoral care, His wise oversight, could reach "the people of His pasture, the sheep of His hand." Have His people turned unto Him? Has He been welcomed as Head of the church, as Head of the body? Has the unbelief and pride of men, called by His name, compelled the Lord, after showing His ordinances of salvation, to remove them from before the eyes of His people? If the Shepherd be cast out, who shall save the flock? When the Shepherd first came, He was slain as a wolf. He receiveth the same treatment still. The flock of old, which cast out and slew their shepherd was "caught and scattered" by the true wolf. So will it be again.

Who shall warn with a warning that shall be heeded? God is losing, and the old deceiver is again recovering, the ear of men. That "which we heard from the beginning" is taken from us—what remains worthy of confidence? The Good Shepherd sees all the danger, which threatens the sheep, and stands between them and it. The hireling sees danger coming, and saves himself from it, leaving the flock exposed. Jesus spake

the Gospel of this day to hireling shepherds, some of them self-constituted. The Pharisees cast out the faithful witness, the man born blind, whose blindness Christ took away, and who boldly testified for Him, who gave to him his sight. The hireling shepherds did not want discernment of the coming evil—they wanted moral courage to face it. Fear of the Roman wolf mainly hindered them from acknowledging Messiah, when the raising of Lazarus from the dead left them without excuse for rejecting Him. The spirit of cowardice was in the disciples of the Lord ; it found expression in the chief of them, and was only taken away by the giving of the Holy Ghost. The kings and bishops of Christendom are not blind to the danger, that threatens them—they see the “ wolf coming,” but they lack courage. Unbelief makes God to be far off—sense shows antichrist to be near—the present enemy is conciliated. Help is despaired of from the distant friend. Oh, for that spirit, by whom the distance is annihilated, to fill the church,—then knowing God as the present help in trouble, we shall not be afraid though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. “ The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.”

I Peter ii., 19; John x., 11-16.

THANKWORTHY! Who will thank you? Even the Lord Himself. Why and for what will He thank you? For having, for His sake, borne wrong patiently, and forborne with those who provoked you. We know not how we save men, when we forbear,—how we prevail against the devil, when we are gentle. We know not what mischief we do when we are angry, and render back to men in word or act the injury they do to us. The Psalm says, “Fret not thyself to be angry, lest thou do evil.” In the Church of England version it is, “or you will do evil.” Perhaps no man was ever angry under personal provocation, but what he did do evil. There is no lesson more difficult to learn. When we think we have arrived at some degree of patience with our fellow-men, some unexpected and sudden provocation proves to us, and makes manifest to others, how small a degree of perfection in this grace we have attained to. James puts it before us as one of the chief preparations for the coming of the Lord. He foretells the oppression of the last days, and then says, Therefore, because men wrong you, be patient, because the *Lord* draws nigh. They have lost sight of this in Christendom. Men are provoked, and Satan is saying to them, “Destroy those that vex you.” And there is hardly a member of Christ in all Christendom that says, “therefore, be patient.” Let us then seek for this

grace, and ask for it. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is of great price in the sight of the Lord.

They are now showing in London the bridal gifts, the ornaments of the Princess. What do these symbolize to our spirits, but the gifts given to the church for her bridal? How can we have the gift of patience without trial? The diamond is very beautiful. It is so hard, that it will bear almost any roughness without being affected; you cannot well ruffle its surface.

What is the chief feature of the last days? Impatience. Peter, in our Epistle, applies this chiefly to servants. The first thing a servant does now-a-days, immediately he is offended, is to leave his place. This is one of the signs of the times. But it is not limited to servants; it extends itself to all the relationships of life.

The only way to avoid this error, is to wait. Do not answer again, neither by word nor by letter; when men provoke you, wait till next day, or till next week, if you find next day you are still angry. And although men deserve the rebuke or the sharp reply, wait. The Lord will thank you in that day. Blessed be the man, or the woman, to whom the Lord will say, in that day, I thank you. I thank you for forbearing with that person under that provocation. You stopped mischief; you prevented infinite evil; you hindered the breaking out of the waters, that would have swept souls into destruction.

To hear Him saying "Thank you," will be more than all the honours and powers that He will give us. And

we shall say it to one another. I thank you for forbearing with me, when I was wayward and wrong.

We need this grace of patience, too, in another way in this day. Patience with the slowness of men, who will not receive the work of the Lord ; and with those who slander us and misrepresent us because of it ; and with those, who are not only opposing truth, but teaching error. How much we know not ; but those who mix with the clergy, they learn something of the need of it. To use patience is one way of showing, that we are shepherds, not hirelings ; one way of laying down our lives for the sheep. I know no greater proof that we are not hirelings, but that the sheep are our own. Let us seek this grace then at the hands of the Lord, this day ; and in offering the memorial of the sacrifice of the patient One, let us ask, that when we partake of His body and of His blood, we may be given to be partakers in His patience.

I Peter ii., 19 ; John x., 11-16.

WE are the sheep of Christ. He is the Shepherd, as well as the Bishop of our souls. He is the *good* Shepherd. This title is one expression of watchful care, wise and vigilant protection, singular devotedness, and constant rule. On the other hand, the distinctive character of sheep is that of proneness to error, utter inability to protect or guide themselves, defence-

lessness. This term fitly represents what we and all mankind are by nature. "All we like sheep have gone astray," for we have all turned away from God. But in this, as in many other respects, that which is expressive of evil, when descriptive of our natural state, represents what is good, when used in reference to our redeemed and recovered state. Nothing more helpless, more foolish, nothing more determined on going astray, than a flock of sheep left to itself, or one having broken its bounds; the prey of every enemy, alarmed at every appearance of danger, ever continuing its wanderings, and, it is said, never returning of itself. On the other hand, what so peaceable, what more expressive of quiet enjoyment and security than a well guarded flock, watched over, cared for, tended by a skilful, faithful, and good shepherd. The former is the description of man, as man; the latter the description of the church as the church; the one all wild and erring, the other secure and happy. Oh! why is it that the elements of the former should have found place in the latter, in the church, the fold of Christ? Is He the *good* Shepherd? Have we heard His voice? Do we know that He has laid down His life for the sheep?

Surely He could have done no more, or for His vineyard, or for His flock. Yet it may well be said, "where is thy flock, thy beautiful flock?" It has been scattered on the mountains, the shepherds have not fed or kept it, therefore division and weakness, and sorrow and wasting have been in the midst of it. But He, the good Shepherd, changeth not; He will not forsake the flock,

which He has purchased with His own blood. He that saith, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people," even "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd." The flock shall again "pass under the hand of Him that telleth them." That which the Lord has done in our days, is only one of the continuous acts of the good Shepherd; we have all strayed, we could not return of ourselves, we do not of ourselves know what is the fold; when the shepherds are divided amongst themselves, when the hirelings flee, who could guide the flock? His own arm brought salvation. He that laid down His life for the sheep, has never forsaken His people, therefore has He restored the ordinances, the defences given at the beginning, that He might save the "flock of slaughter." Now let us learn respecting Him, who is the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. "He bare our sins in His own body, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness." He not only suffered for us, as our sin-bearer, but that He might leave us an *example*, that we should follow His steps. He suffered *wrongfully*, for He did only what was good. If we do well, and suffer in any way, and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. Let us be content to be misunderstood, evil spoken of; nay, let us rejoice if we may in the least degree be like unto Jesus our Shepherd and Bishop. He exercises His pastoral care by those on whom He puts His own name; for He is Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist and Pastor; we receive from Him the care, the guidance, the protection, the comfort, the strength which He ministers through them. They "feed His flock" in His name, and for Him.

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." And what is that crown? "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing, are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming." The Lord is our Shepherd, and we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Let us worship and bow down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker. Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

I Peter ii., 11-17 ; John xvi., 16-22.

THE Epistle for this day is of a very practical character, applying to the whole walk and conversation of the members of Christ. And in what character does the apostle Peter address them? As *strangers* and *pilgrims*. In what sense are we to understand these designations? Do they imply the becoming ascetics—monks and nuns—so hiding themselves from the world around them? The whole tenour of the exhortation forbids such a conclusion, but enforces the duties, which they are to fulfil as living *in the world*, that those who see and know them, beholding their good works, may glorify God in the day of visitation. Still, these terms, *strangers* and *pilgrims*, have a meaning—a *forcible* meaning—and that is, that they should walk in the world as not belonging to it; saying, by their life, “Here, we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.” He makes this the basis of his exhortation to various duties, well knowing that they who are of the world—entangled with the world—identified with the world, and not a distinct people, cannot glorify God as members of Christ, as Christians

are called to do. God has an election out of the world, that He may thereby show Himself unto the world, that the world, seeing the character of His elect, may, *in a time of visitation*, acknowledge God in them, and turn to Him, and glorify Him.

Dear brethren, you are not to look for the *effect* of your faithfulness and devotion to God as an immediate thing. You may set a good example; you may use faithful words; you may pray, as you ought to do, without ceasing, for all men, and you may look in vain to see any result, but the time may, yea, will come, when your life *shall tell*, and the apostle gives the clue to the time—“*in the day of visitation.*” That day may be a day of personal affliction, pain, sorrow, or worldly affliction, trouble; *then* reflection comes, and they, who despised you in their prosperity, will turn round and cry, “Come to my help.” But the *day of visitation* has a more enlarged significance. When the Lord shall have sealed His elect, and the four winds are let loose upon the earth, *that* will be the day of *God's visitation*, by heavy judgments; and out of that will come a multitude, who shall join the heavenly host and glorify God, calling to remembrance your living testimony. Now brethren, let us see what a solemn duty is laid upon the church to bear witness for God, while opportunity is given them so to do. And how is that to be? By being *strangers* and *pilgrims*—that is, not so attaching themselves to the things of time and sense, as to allow them to interfere with that spiritual life, of which they were made partakers when the Lord put His mark upon them in

their baptism—making them *dead* to the world and alive unto Him; no longer their own, but His; grafted into the true Vine, that they might bring forth fruit to His glory.

And now let us glance at the duties enjoined. First, to “abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” And, oh, what watchfulness is needful in order to do this! The crushing in the bud the first lustful desire, which, if indulged, soon bursts into a flame. Crush it at once.—And then the duty of avoiding everything that pampers man’s nature—intemperance, sloth, and evil associations—and to be up and doing every duty, which belongs to the station of life in which God has placed us. Active duty is a great defence against evil.—Submission to all lawful authority, is another duty and safeguard; to the King or Queen, and to all holding authority under them; to parents, guardians, and elder kindred; to masters and mistresses; for these all hold their authority *from God*, and in yielding willing obedience to them, we are obeying God, and honouring Him. The powers that be are ordained of God. In proportion as by the grace of God we follow these duties, we do show forth the blessedness of Christ’s kingdom, and are preparers of the way for it. And this rule of obedience is not to be governed by our estimate of the characters of those over us. We are not to sit in judgment upon them; *that destroys obedience*. Those over us may err and oppress us; but if, for conscience sake toward God, we endure it patiently, it is thankworthy, and God is well pleased, and *He* will be our defence

and avenger in His own time. Be patient therefore, brethren, and await *His* time. Inasmuch as you rebel against any lawful authority, you are a revolutionist, and putting yourself in the hands of the adversary to use you at his will.

And now let us turn for a moment to the cheering promise contained in the Gospel. "A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me." We are living in the "little while." Our blessed Lord does not measure time as we do. He is now with the Father. It is, it should be, a time of weeping, because the Lord is absent; but with that also a time of *hope*, for the day comes, when our sorrows shall be turned into joy. The church is in travail, but she shall soon bring forth her child. Joy shall come in the morning of the resurrection day—a joy perpetual and unchanging—which the Son of man shall give, and no man take from you. Abide in this hope, and *it* shall purify and fit you for His blessed presence. Peace be with you.

I Pet. ii., 11-17; John xvi., 16-2.

DEARLY beloved; in addressing you I adopt the language of the writer of the Epistle, for it expresses the feeling, that should pervade the hearts of all God's ministers towards His people. Love is the binding principle, it not only has the power of *persuasion*, but it has also the power of *rebuke*; it shall be as an

excellent oil that will not break the head, (Ps. 141.) every ministry should be a ministry of love for the blessing of those who are ministered to. I may further adopt the apostle's language “I beseech you,” for this does not diminish the authority of those on whom rule devolves, for commandment is with them, and loving obedience the duty of all. And this is the tenour of the apostle's teaching in this part of the Epistle. Submission to every ordinance, not only to the ordinances of God, immediate as it were, but to every ordinance of *man* for the *Lord's* sake, virtually making the ordinances of man to be the ordinances of God, seeing that it is *His will* that they should be obeyed.

The divine right of kings and governors is a principle for the most part treated with contempt in our days, and we may see something of the fruit of such contempt in the horrible events of recent occurrence ; and these, we may fear, are only a foreshowing of the subversion of all authority, and of the utter confusion which will ensue. It should be a warning to every one against the evil of non-submission, should lead every one, who would escape the snare of the devil, to cultivate in themselves and in others, over whom they have influence, the spirit of subjection to the powers that be.

Brethren, our calling is not to be citizens of the world, but to be pilgrims and strangers, walking through the world, leaning on the two staffs, faith and hope, which will carry us far better and safer through, than all worldly wisdom, riches, or power ; all of which tend to minister to the lusts of the flesh ; sloth, pride, and indulgence, all

of which war against the soul. The motive to obedience and honest conversation, is to silence accusers, and constrain them to glorify God in the *day of visitation*. Mark the time when your faithful walk is to tell upon others, not now, not, it may be, within the time of your observation, but, in the *day of visitation*. Men are careless and thoughtless, while everything is smooth and prosperous around them ; they think all things will continue as they are, at least in their day ; but suddenly the "*day of visitation*" comes—trouble upon trouble—then their thoughts turn to those who fear God, and walk in His ways, and they are glad to flee into the refuge which they know others have found. Bear your witness faithfully, fearlessly, and the Lord will make it tell upon men. The summary of the Epistle is very beautiful and comprehensive, " Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King."

" Honour all men." This embraces high and low, rich and poor, weak and strong. To honour *men as men*. Men as bearing the nature, which the Son of God condescended to take ; putting an honour upon that nature, which the Son of God condescended to take ; putting an honour upon that nature, even beyond what it had by creation. If the Lord of heaven and earth condescended to make the nature of man His dwelling-place, how can we do otherwise than look upon our fellow-man, whatsoever his condition, with a feeling of honour and respect ; which feeling cherished, would induce in us deep sorrow, when we see man degrade the honour and dignity which belongs to him.

“Love the brotherhood.” This warrants and calls for a special affection towards those brought into the brotherhood of Christ, and this not only by reason of being made partakers of the life of Christ in baptism, but further by that intimate association of ministers and members (brethren), brought together by having one faith and one hope. Amidst such, love should abound.

“Fear God.” This, we are taught, is the “beginning of wisdom.” That holy reverence towards God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which makes our spirits shrink from indulging a thought, a word, or a deed which would grieve our God, which would cause Him to mourn over us, or withdraw from us the light of His countenance. We should ever realize His presence with a godly fear, and so be ever seeking to please Him.

“Honour the King.” The head of the ordinances of men; this covers all beneath; God’s providential way of preserving good order in the communities of men. It ranges through all civil institutions, and is a preparatory exercise for that obedience, which the world will have to render to the Lord Jesus Christ when He shall reign King of kings, and Lord of lords. Honour the King.

And this subject leads us to Jesus our King, and to the comforting words which He spake to His disciples, as recorded in the Gospel. “A little while and ye shall *not* see me, and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father. And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and

your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." Is not this our position? Sorrow at the length of the little while, yet the joy of hope to see Him as He is, and to be made like Him when no man shall take away our joy. Oh, for grace to be found abiding in this hope without ceasing; let us lie down with this upon our hearts, let us rise up with it fresh and bright, that it may be refreshing as the dew of the morning, and cheer us through the day; and so living, verily, we shall not be disappointed of our hope.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

James i., 17-21; John xvi., 5-15.

WE have heard much lately concerning first-fruits, but do we rightly understand the true significance of this word ? In the type the first-fruits of any crop or harvest, is offered to God, that the remainder may be blessed and sanctified. If the first-fruits be not rendered, then the rest of the harvest is unblessed and unclean. If it be offered, then the remainder is blessed and holy.

There is always a connection between the Epistle and the Gospel.

The Epistle of to-day says, that the church is a kind of first-fruits—not the first-fruits—but a *kind* of first-fruits. The Lord Jesus is *the* First-fruits, *i.e.*, He is the first who served God perfectly, and was first raised from the dead, and was taken up into heaven, that He might sanctify the rest of men, and gather them into the garner of God in due season. The whole are blessed for His sake ; and in order to sanctify all the rest, it was needful that He Himself, as He says in the Gospel, should go away to the Father, that He might receive the Holy Ghost wherewith to sanctify all the rest.

The principle of offering first-fruits is, that it is the outward recognition and acknowledgment of the great truth that God is the *First*. That is His name. He is the beginning of all things, of all existence, of all good, come in what shape it may to the creature. The fall of devils and men came from the denial of this. Christ, the First-fruits of men redeemed from the fall, ever recognized and inculcated this to us in all His words and acts. “There is none good but One,” He said to the inquiring lawyer. When we offer the first-fruits of anything to God, it is the acknowledgment that He is the first—the beginner of them, and the giver of them—and so He blesses all the remainder of it to us. If we withhold the first-fruits, the rest is not blessed; we are acting like atheists.

Jesus Christ then, was the First-fruits of man redeemed from death to serve God. He ascended to the Father, to receive, as the First-fruits, the blessing of God, to communicate it to all mankind. He received the Holy Ghost in order to sanctify His church.

The church also is a kind of first-fruits—for all mankind can be blessed. The Lord must have His church to bless them with. And there is another kind of first-fruits, viz., the 144,000 who must be offered for the service of God before the church can be blessed.

The Jews also are to be a kind of first-fruits; for they must be gathered and offered to God before all nations can be blessed.

Jesus, the First-fruits of mankind; the church, the first-fruits of all men; the 144,000, the first-fruits of

the church; the Jews, the first-fruits of the nations, as nations.

Mankind could not be blessed without the offering of Him, the First-fruits, who first, in all His words and acts, made the acknowledgment that God was the Lord.

The church cannot be blessed, till the 144,000 be gathered and offered.

All men cannot be blessed, till the church, the first-fruits out of every nation, and people, and tongue, be gathered and offered.

The nations cannot be blessed, till the Jews, the first-fruits of the nations, be gathered and offered.

You see, then, the importance of your calling; not only to be among that kind of first-fruits, which includes the whole church, which you are, but also among that kind of first-fruits, which pertains to the sealed ones. The harvest of the church cannot be blessed and gathered, till that first-fruits of it are offered. The harvest of the earth cannot be gathered and blessed, till the church be gathered and offered. Perhaps the gathering of the harvest of the earth may be a first-fruits of all the universe of future creation. Yield yourselves then, to be among the first-fruits of the church; acknowledge the Lord to be the *First* in all things; and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which comes from Him who is the First. Count it all joy, when you fall into temptation, that your sins and shortcomings being thus revealed to you you may, by Christ Jesus, overcome them and be victorious over them, and so be counted worthy to be among that blessed number. We offer the

sacrifice of the holy eucharist, that our sins may be forgiven ; we partake of the body and blood of Him, who is *the First-fruits*, that we also, by His dwelling in us, may be not only a kind of first-fruits, but that kind of first-fruits, which the sealed ones are.

James i., 17-21 ; John xvi., 5-15.

THE power of the word of truth is the subject of the Epistle, the mission of the spirit of truth is the subject of the Gospel. James would enhance, in the estimation of the church, the importance of the ministry of the word of God ; therefore he makes mention of the two great results, which God has connected with it. “ Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth ; ” “ with meekness receive the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.” Regeneration and salvation comprise all that the church can receive to prepare her for the high place, to which she is predestined as the first-fruits of God’s creatures. God’s word is ministered in His church to secure the double end, (of regeneration and salvation.) Let no man therefore undervalue what God hath so highly honoured. “ Let every man be swift to hear.” “ Let every man put away all superfluity of naughtiness and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save his soul.” In the beginning of the dispensation the church before her baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, received into her mind and spirit “ the word of

truth." Since the baptism of infants has prevailed, all those baptized in their infancy must, in their childhood and youth and manhood, receive into them also the "word of truth," otherwise they can never find their place amongst those, who are called the "first-fruits of God's creatures," who have to take their place at the head of all His works, to go before all, to instruct all, to guide all into the ways of God and into the enjoyment of His blessing for ever. The man, who comes to the font of baptism without the word of truth in him, comes in vain, yea, comes for judgment. The man who, having been baptized *in infancy*, refuses to hear the Gospel of the grace of God, and to be fully instructed in the "word of truth," in the word which testifies of Him who is the truth, does what he can to annul his baptism, to make it a profaned rite, and to bring down upon his head, because of the profanation, the terrible wrath of God. Adults were baptized as believing the gospel, their children were pledged in their baptism to the belief of that Gospel, which their fathers had received. "To as many as received Christ, to them has God given power to become His children." Every man must receive Christ for himself, and that he may receive Him, and joyfully receive Him, must learn the truth concerning Him, which in the church is taught by the continual ministry of the word of God. Why are baptized men for the most part so silent respecting Jesus Christ? Why are they unable to testify of Him? unwilling to serve Him, and to magnify His name? It is because though baptized in His name, they know not the truth

concerning Him and will not learn it. "I believed, therefore have I spoken;" they believe not, therefore they do not, they cannot speak. Even in the day when the Epistle before us was written, men in the church were screening themselves from the word of God by many things, which the apostle calls "filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness." In the midst of them he insisted, that all those obstructive surroundings should be taken away; the tree and the graft must meet. The graft must be prepared to be inserted into the tree; the tree must be pierced to admit the insertion. The things interposed between the tree and the graft, which is to pierce it, whatever value and beauty and interest they may have in your estimation, are in the sight of God but foul incrustations which must be pared away, mischievous redundancies and superfluities, which may not be spared, but must be entirely removed. A way must be made for the graft to enter, and that which stands in the way, may not be suffered to remain. After the sermon in the Christian church we are taught to pray, "Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the words, which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may through Thy grace be so *grafted* inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living to the honour and praise of Thy name through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Head of the church is the Word of God. He speaks the word in season to His people gathered before Him, waiting upon Him. Those who speak and those who hear are in His hands. The Lord gives the word; great is the company

of those who publish it. Blessed are they who receive with meekness what He gives. He speaks what they need to hear. Let what they have heard be engrrafted upon them, it shall save them from the evils by which at that time their salvation is most eminently imperilled. The ways of the lier in wait are many and variable ; the Lord detects and frustrates his stratagems by continually ministering unto His people the "word of truth," by which they learn the will of God and escape from the delusions and snares of the enemy. The Epistle declares the value of the ministry of the "word of truth ;" the Gospel gives the reason, because the Spirit of truth Himself is in the church, that the truth may be both spoken and heard, that speakers and hearers may be led into all truth together. Though our heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ be on the throne in the heavens, which our eyes have not yet seen, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son is with us upon the earth, our present Help in all our need. Who appreciates as he ought the unspeakable gift ? The Lord reproved His disciples because they were so little encouraged by the word, which He spake unto them concerning His going unto the Father and His sending unto them of the Comforter. The word, which was meant to gladden them, only filled their hearts with sorrow. They took no interest in the promise, which the Lord connected with His going unto the Father. Alas, unto the present day their unbelief has been followed by those, to whom the promises of God have been spoken. The first Christians made pilgrimages to Christ's holy sepulchre ; multitudes

still make the same pilgrimage in greater darkness, in deeper superstition, and those who are not found making pilgrimages to His tomb, still take little interest in His going unto the Father, and in the special object for which He went. They occupy themselves much, even inordinately, with other things and give but slight and cursory regard to that, for which Christ said it was expedient that He should go away. Nevertheless, He said, it is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you. He has come on His double mission, first to overthrow what is false, next to lead into all truth. He has come to unmask the world, and to reveal Christ. He negatives the pretensions of the world upon every point; He establishes the claims of Christ; He glorifies *Him*. The world pretends that it can attain unto righteousness without the help of Christ. To support that pretension it brings forth a counterfeit millennium. The Holy Ghost alone will be able to detect the imposture. The world denies that any righteousness unattainable by it is possible. The Holy Ghost refutes that lie by working Christ's righteousness in His body, the church, by perpetuating in the church the life of Him, who is gone unto the Father, and in His own person is seen by the world no more till the day when He shall descend to judgment. The world confiding in its strength boasts, that it must prevail. It mocks at judgment and derides the promise of Christ's coming again. The Holy Ghost manifests that Christ has overcome the world and the prince of the

world as well. The Holy Ghost gives the sensible proofs, that He whom the world rejected, cast out, and crucified, is made Lord of all. The Holy Ghost manifests, that God is the rewarder of righteousness, that He has crowned with glory and honour Him who wrought righteousness and abolished sin. Righteousness and power are united in the Head of the church, and in those who are made partakers of His likeness. This is the testimony of the Spirit of truth; of this He giveth many proofs and earnests. Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad; a glorious reversion awaits them; righteousness shall dwell in them; the righteous King shall rule over them; His joint-heirs shall rule with Him, being first made anew in His righteous image, and then made partakers of His kingdom. Blessed be God our Heavenly Father who hath willed our blessedness. Blessed be the Son of God, our only Lord, who hath wrought out salvation for us. Blessed be the Spirit of truth who sheddeth forth God's love in our hearts, and maketh us to know the things that are freely given unto us of God. To the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, one God, be all glory ascribed for evermore.

James i., 17-21; John xvi., 5-15.

“**O**F His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.” Of His own will. It has been impressed

strongly on my spirit of late, that there is one great truth, the knowledge of which is needful to make you love the Lord your God with *all* your heart, which we hardly ever hear mentioned among us; there is a shrinking from it—I mean, what we owe—the immeasurable debt of gratitude we each of us, as individuals, owe to Almighty God our Heavenly Father for His election of us as individuals to be His people, His first-fruits. And yet why are we here this day, assembled together in this church, believing in, and waiting for certain things which the rest of mankind, and even too many of the baptized, are not believing in, not waiting for, except that it is by the *election of grace*, by the *electing* will of God the *Father* that we are so? It is He that has chosen you, not you that have chosen Him. Let us endeavour to realize this great fact. Let us not be depriving ourselves of the great benefit and blessing which the recognizing of this great fact will bring to us, nor let us deprive God of the thanksgivings and glory due to Him for this, by perplexing ourselves with vain questions, and metaphysical discussions about election, reprobation, &c., as the contending sects do, nor perplex ourselves as to how this is reconcileable with God's declared love to all men, and His desire that they all shall be saved. Put away these disquisitions, leave them alone. You will never be able to solve that mystery. But believe in the election of the Father, and in your election by Him. Give Him thanks. Say unto Him always, “Father, I thank Thee indeed for having chosen me.” If we give thanks unto God “for our creation,

preservation, and all the blessings of this life, for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the gift of the Holy Ghost, for the means of grace, for the hope of glory," give the Father Almighty thanks for His election of grace, for His election of you. If you love the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for dying for you, for pleading and interceding for you, for giving Himself *for* you and *to* you ; if you love the Blessed Spirit, God the Holy Ghost, for His condescending to you, for His patient bearing with you and all your follies and perversities, stupidities and blindnesses, for His abiding with you notwithstanding all your provocations and endeavours to vex Him from you—then love also your Heavenly Father for having *chosen you*. Shrink not from it, realize it, believe it, doubt it not, rise up into it. It will be your life, your strength, your joy. Leave disquisitions about fate and free will to Mahometans and Calvinists, who perplex their own selves, and darken God's counsel by such speculations. Do you believe in the electing love of the *Father*, of *your* Father, who of *His own will* hath begotten you by His word, to be the first-fruits of His creatures, to bless by you the remainder of them ? Give Him glory for it, love Him for it, give Him thanks for it. Let the love of the Father be shed abroad in your hearts by seeing this truth, by apprehending this truth. You will never love the Father as you ought, unless you believe this, that He of *His own will* has chosen you to be among His first-fruits.

What is the meaning of first-fruits ? and why does God

ask of you to bring to Him not only yourselves, but your tithes, your first-fruits, your offerings? Everything is a sign. God does nothing without signs. We do nothing towards Him without a sign. He asks us to bring our tithes, our first-fruits, our offerings to Him. What does all this mean? what are these moneys in the form of tithes and first-fruits, and third year's tithes or offerings? It means this, that we thereby by a tangible sign show unto God, that He is King of all the earth, and that the day is soon coming when He will be established and manifested as such, and then that He will communicate peace, prosperity, and happiness to all the earth; and that we believe that *we* are *His* portion, His tithe from among the children of men, His first-fruits, the very means whereby He will by-and-bye sanctify, bless, help, comfort, succour all men in the earth. He says therefore in Scripture: Bring yourselves first to Me, and then bring your money, that I by you and by your money may bless and comfort the needy in spirit and in body by you and your money, and so get glory to myself by the thanksgiving of those, whom I help by your money. Your money is nothing to Me. Mine is the silver and the gold, but your money is the sign, that you believe yourselves to be what I have made you, My first-fruits, that you believe what is coming when the kingdom comes. If you withhold yourselves from Me, you will also withhold your money. But many may give money to the poor and yet not bring it to the Lord in tithe, first-fruits, and offerings. Many do, but they are mere benevolent men, they do not know what it is to be

the first-fruits and the tithe, God's portion, God's elect, and for which purpose elect. But you do. You know what tithe and first-fruits and offerings for the Lord, the widow and the stranger and the fatherless mean. Now James in this chapter says just the same thing, " You are God's first-fruits, *wherefore*,"—because you are so, because you know that now is not the time to gather the harvest, to gather *all* men in, but only the first-fruits. Do not you go about in anger, quarrelling with men because they won't believe you, what you say about God and His kingdom, and His righteousness. Do not be angry, you will not do any good by that, you will only work mischief and harden their hearts; go about among men patiently, leaving it to God to draw and gather the first-fruits. And then go about doing good, visit the widow and the fatherless and keep yourselves unspotted from the world. So you will fulfil your office of first-fruits now, in a measure, as you will do in the full, when the time comes for you to teach all, to bless and succour all, and wipe away every tear from every eye. And " *wherefore* " all this? Because God has chosen you to be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures, a *kind* of first-fruits, yes, because Jesus Christ is the alone true First-fruits, God's Elect, His chosen One through whom He means to teach all, bless all. But you also are a kind of first-fruits, for God has chosen you to be joined unto Jesus, and to be raised from the dead before the rest, " every man in his own order, Christ the First-fruits, then they that are Christ's at His coming, that you may with Him teach all, bless all the dwellers upon

the earth." This is what God has elected you for and to be. Now this, brethren, is the point I want to impress upon your hearts and spirits that you may love God, that you may love the Father, that your whole heart and mind may go forth in love to your Father in heaven who has elected you of His own will, who has chosen you to be His sons, to be His first-fruits, to be His ministers of patience and mercy *now* to *some*, hereafter to *all*, the healers of the breaches, of the wounds which sin and sorrow have made. Therefore He blesses you this day with the blessing of the holy sacrament, not by waving it before you, but by giving it to you, His elect. I say again if you shrink from contemplating the election of the Father, you will not love the Father as you ought. Believe in it, cast yourselves upon Him in it, and pour out your thanks before Him, for He has chosen you, and you have not chosen Him, and He will perfect that which concerneth you, and you will give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, which you will not do if you do not believe in your election.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

James i., 22; John xvi., 23.

WE are all of us conscious, that we fail in doing the word which, with more or less readiness, we hear. I trust there are not many here, of whom it could be said absolutely, that they are hearers and *not* doers. Too many there are who complain of oppression and bondage of spirit. They strive after liberty, but cannot attain it. They complain that they cannot find peace, the dove will not come back to the ark of their hearts; in other words, they daringly say that they cannot find Christ, who offers to us peace and rest in Himself. And some there are who, making profession of religion, indulge an unbridled tongue—that false liberal, the tongue, which boasts of freedom, while it is the slave of malice and corruption, and tyrannizes over the whole body. To whatever extent these things are true of us, there is but one account of the matter. We forget what God, in Christ, hath done for us. We think of ourselves; we do not remember Christ. We have not been looking, or we do not sufficiently look, to His blessed and loving countenance. But we have been looking at our own face in a glass, and so when we go away, we forget even

that image and likeness of Christ which, by His grace, has been produced in us.

It was indeed well, that we were reminded on last Lord's day, both in the Epistle and in the homily, of that love, that purpose and will of God, in pursuance of which we were begotten with the word of truth, to be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures. It is well, that we should be again reminded of the truth and reality of that work, which hath been wrought in us. This is the true remedy for our shortcomings and our faults. For since the Holy Ghost hath come down on the believers from the risen One, uniting us unto Him in His own divine and regenerate nature, the law of our life is the law of liberty. The law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law of sin and death. The Lord now speaks to us no longer in parables—parables that the disciples thought they understood, but all that *they* fathomed was, that Christ had come forth from God, a faith which could not keep them from shamefully deserting Him. But now He repeats them again to us, whispering them to us in the secret of our spirits, in which He dwells, breathing them into us, as a man makes His will to be felt and obeyed in every part of his frame.

O blessed Jesus, in Thee is our peace, our life, our joy, and liberty. Abiding in Thee, and Thou in us, the word which we hear is the constant subject of our thought, the constant motive of every action, for Thou art Thyself the Word, that dwelleth in us, and all other word of life comes from Thee, and the exercise of sense

in hearing, and of our mind in apprehending, is but the external method, by which Thy will in us is achieved. By these means Thou workest in us to fulfil all the will of God.

Our perfect freedom, free from all restraints, expatiates in all that is holy, just, and pure, all that is loving and amiable, all that is of good report. It is the law of love that constrains us, and whoso knows what is the constraint of love, knows how truly happy and blessed in his deed is he, that is thus constrained. The tongue is, by a blessed necessity, kept from evil, the lips from speaking guile. It is the very character of all them, that are to be redeemed from among men, and primarily of them, that are to be first-fruits of the redeemed unto God and to the Lamb, that in their mouth is to be found no guile, they are to be faultless before the throne of God ; made like unto Him, who left the throne of glory, and came down in the form of a servant, to seek and to save them that were lost. They who are abiding in the perfect law of liberty go forth into the midst of this evil world, not to enjoy its pleasures, not suffering themselves to be entangled with its allurements or its ambitions, or to be defiled with its contact, but to seek out Christ's little ones, and bring them back to Him ; to win back to Him the love and desires of His widowed spouse, and the reverence and filial regard of His wandering children.

Blessed Jesus, who longest for Thy spouse ; Jesus, who waitest in forbearing mercy for them, that have been scattered from Thee, every man unto his own. These are

the objects to which Thou hast given *our* hearts also to be devoted, and we will never turn aside from pursuing them until that day, when the full number of Thine elect shall be accomplished, the harvest of the earth shall be reaped, Thy sleeping ones gathered unto Thee, and we *altogether* shout as with the voice of a great multitude, the voice of many waters, the voice of many thunderings, "Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready."

"Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this, to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." These things saith Jesus unto us, that in Him we may have peace. In the world we must meet with tribulation, but we will be of good cheer, because He hath overcome the world.

James i., 22; John xvi., 23.

THE Epistle from which *that* for the day is taken, abounds with practical exhortation. No doubt it was needful in the day of James, its author, but happily the word of God is not only applicable but needful at *all* times, especially so in an age of degeneracy such as that, in which we live, and against which we have to contend. Some of you know, and some of you may be ignorant of, the controversies which have at times prevailed in the church on the subject of *faith* and *works*.

But I think we may rest on that word, which declares that "*Faith without works is dead, being alone.*" And I think we may assume, that no *honest* believer in Christ Jesus can deceive himself in this matter. If he be *dis-honest*, and has an unclean conscience, the devil will persuade him, that if he have faith (though it cannot be *real* if inoperative) he may live as he lists. Alas, there have been such self-deceivers, and deceived in all ages of the church. The Epistle runs, "Be ye doers of the word, and not *hearers* only, deceiving your own selves." James writes, that "whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty and continueth therein shall be blessed in his deed." What is that law of liberty? It is the *law of love*—love to Christ as your Redeemer, your Saviour, your Guide, your Intercessor, your loving Lord, who delighteth in you—who watcheth over you with the tenderness of a brother and friend, and leadeth you to living waters to refresh and strengthen you in your pilgrimage—who tells you that the Father loveth you because you believe in His Son, and that He came forth from Him. To rest in the assurance of this love, and to return such love with all your heart—this is the "law of liberty" which will make all obedience easy, and bring the blessing of God upon all your loving deeds. The word of God is our guide as to what works of love are most acceptable with Him and are the right expression of "pure religion;" self-rule—self-government, shown in the bridling of the tongue, is one evidence of pure religion. Study what James says of the tongue, that you may feel the need of putting a bridle there. Let

your words be *pure* words—*wise* words—*blessed* words—*comforting* words—and yield your tongues to the Lord, that He may use them to His glory. Let not Satan use them to kindle in you and others the fire of hell. And one way is pointed out, in which the tongue and the hand may bless—it is well pleasing before God—the “visiting of the fatherless and widows in their affliction.” God reveals Himself as the Husband of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless. And how does He execute these tender relationships? by you—by those who love to be the executors of His love—by His church, and by His people. It is marvellous and full of admiration to observe in what a striking way the Lord does appear for the widows and fatherless, often making their condition better than before their destitution—and that by leading them to look *alone to Him*, and then showing them such tokens of His love, as they knew not before. All His dealings are in love—and that dealing of His hand, which brings us to trust in Him alone, must be a blessing.

Go, as God’s comforter, to the widow and orphan, and you shall know, what *pure religion* is, and be blessed in your deed. Such are the thoughts, which the Epistle presents to the mind. Do any of you long to possess the “law of liberty,” and to fulfil its duties? The Gospel instructs us *how* to obtain it, and to walk in its ways. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, He will give it you.” Prayer to God the Father in the name of Christ is the prevailing means of attaining whatsoever we desire for the glory of God, and the blessings of man. And the encouragement

the Lord gives to His church, is not so much *His* prevailing intercession, though we know that in that He faileth not, but the assurance that the *Father loveth us*, and that because we love Christ, and believe that He came forth from the Father. How much turns upon the pivot of love ! And can we wonder—for “ God is love,” —and how can there be communion with God, if there be not love ? like can only mingle with like. There is no process with the moral alchymist, that can make love and hatred unite—nor even love and indifference. The heart does not open its affection to another heart, in which there is no sentiment of love. Oh, my beloved brethren, let us so meditate upon God, who is love—so yield ourselves to the gracious operation of the Holy Ghost to kindle this in us—so withdraw ourselves from the entangling influences of a corrupt nature, that there may be room, ample room for God to work in us all His holy will and pleasure, and conform us to the mind of Christ—who, when left alone by His disciples, held fast by His Father. Measure not your heavenly Father’s love by present things. The legacy of Christ to His church was “ Tribulation in the world,” but peace in Himself. Peace in Him, who has obtained the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and *that* not for *Himself* alone, but for *you*, and for all that love His appearing.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

I Peter, iv., 7-11; John xv., 26, to xvi., 4.

ON Ascension day we sing the 20th and 21st Psalms, “The Lord remember all Thy offerings and accept Thy burnt sacrifice, grant Thee according to Thine own heart, and fulfil all Thy counsel.”

The time had come for Him, of whom this was written, to receive the recompense for His sacrifices—the answer to all His prayers. “The King shall joy in Thy strength, O Lord, and in Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice. Thou hast given Him His heart’s desire, and hast not withholden the request of His lips. For Thou preventest Him with the blessings of goodness; Thou settest a crown of pure gold on His head. He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest it Him, even length of days for ever and ever. His glory is great in Thy salvation. Honour and majesty hast Thou laid upon Him. Thou hast made Him exceeding glad with Thy countenance.”

These are the words of the Holy Ghost, prophesying what should take place at the ascension of Jesus Christ. “Remember all Thy offerings—accept Thy sacrifice.” God remembers all the offerings of His people; there is

not one offering, one sacrifice, that shall not be recompensed to them. How much more shall the offerings of His Son receive their recompense, whose whole life was a continued series of offerings? "Accept Thy sacrifice." The burnt-offering, the sin-offering, the peace-offering, the thank-offering, all that in the old testament had been typified concerning sacrifices and offerings, the Lord Jesus offered them all. Men and angels had rebelled, and had refused to render unto God the glory due unto His name, to offer themselves for His worship and service—the creature's duty. The rebel and robber spirit had got power over man—in man—the spirit, that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Man's flesh was his stronghold. But God, out of His great love, sent His Son to bring back that flesh to worship and to obedience, and to offer up in it those sacrifices that were God's due—all that God required, all that the law required. And He, by the Holy Ghost, did do it in the flesh, fulfilling all righteousness. Righteousness is offering unto God His due. Unrighteousness is withholding from God what is His due. Who can tell the amount of unrighteousness there is in the earth; not merely by transgression of the law, by gross violations of morality, but by withholding that which is due to God? How often do you transgress by withholding the worship that is His due? Christ came and fulfilled all. He offered the burnt-offering, the laying down of the natural life daily, by devoting the whole being unto God, to His worship and service—all in strict accordance with the type of the law—the head in due order, the members,

and the inwards washed, &c. There was no failing in that holocaust. There was no falling off the altar of any part of the flesh, so that the priest should take it up and replace it on the fire on the altar again. And when the time of the grand sin-offering arrived, then He offered it on the cross, and made expiation. Ever at peace with God, He offered His peace-offering continually, and communicated it at this time by ascending into the hill of God and going into His presence. Man and God, reconciled again, meet face to face—Eden's mischief done away. What a moment that must have been, when man stood again in the presence of God, looking Him in the face again! Well might the Holy Ghost say, in the Psalm, “Thou hast made Him exceeding glad with Thy countenance.”

His thank-offering! All His life was a thank-offering—a perpetual eucharist—specially at the institution of the eucharist on Holy Thursday; and it was perfected when He entered into the presence of His Father, and will be carried out by Him for ever, when He sings the Father's praise “in the midst of His brethren.”

“The Lord remember all Thy offerings and accept Thy burnt sacrifice. Offerings many—sacrifices manifold—each one receiving its due recompense. “Grant Thee according to Thine own heart.” And God did grant Him all. God gave Him the golden crown of universal sovereignty over all the kingdoms—over all in heaven and in earth (Phil. ii., 10). He asked life of Thee, and Thou gavest Him long life, even for ever and ever (Heb. v.). He has obtained all He asked for. He has

ascended. Ascension Thursday has come, and we are keeping the Sunday after Ascension. But who is this that has done *all* this, and sacrificed all sacrifices, and attained and obtained all these things? Were not all these things—almighty power and eternal life, and the light of His Father's face—His before the world began? Yes, verily. How then came He to need them? Because He had foregone them all for our sakes, that He, by sacrifice, might obtain them for us, might attain to them again, that He might share them with us (John xvii., 22).

And now what remains for us but to believe all this, and to join ourselves to it, and share in it, and give thanks, and then, by the name of Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Ghost, to offer our sacrifices, our burnt-offering, our sin-offering, by confession of our sins, believing in the cross; our peace-offering, through His blood; our thank-offering, our eucharist, which we offer unto God, and to Him, this day, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be honour, and glory, and thanksgiving, for ever.

I Peter iv., 7-11; John xv., 26, to xvi., 4..

THE appearance of the new creation is the proof, that the end of the old has come. The transition has begun; the change shall soon be accomplished. The new creation appeared in heaven on that day, when Jesus Christ ascended unto God. On that day, God looked

upon His new creation, and proclaimed it very good. He blessed the work of His own hands, and crowned it with glory and honour. He said unto His Son, whom He had sent into the world as Son of God, and received back into heaven not only as Son of God, but also Son of man, " Sit Thou at My right hand, behold Thou art a priest, for ever, after the order of Melchizedec."

The apostles, who saw Jesus at the right hand of God, and the new creation in Him, were able to say to all men upon the earth, " The end of all things is at hand. Old things are passed away, all things are become new." The new world has begun, the old is hastening to its end. Turn ye to that which God has accepted ; cast in your lot with it. Be married to Him, that is raised from the dead ; share with Him in His destiny ; dwell in Him ; let Him take possession of you, and dwell in you ; be one with Him. With respect to the old world, which must end, which hath seen the beginning of its end, be sober ; let it not intoxicate you ; let it not excite you inordinately ; look not back upon the doomed, look forward to the deathless. Pray for that which is coming, that it may come quickly ; encourage and strengthen that which helps and quickens prayer. Be sober and watch. Be sober in your mind ; be temperate in your body, in order that you may pray. A man over-excited in his mind about the present world, cannot pray. If our bodies be surfeited with meat and drink, we cannot pray. Cares, surfeiting, and drunkenness, are the hindrances against which the Lord warned His own disciples. The chief of them repeats this day, in our ears,

the words of his Lord, when he says to us, “Be sober, and watch unto prayer.” In the original it is—unto prayers. Be ready for prayers of every kind—for private, personal prayer; for family prayer; for prayer in the church. Surfeiting and drunkenness, sloth and sleep, hinder private prayer, and cause irregularity and languor in family devotion; and having failed in our own houses, we cannot be but feeble in the worship of the church. They who have prayed for themselves, and for their own families, are strengthened to pray in the church for the body of Christ. That prayer may not fail, let love abound. Love is the fountain, prayers are the streams which flow from it. In proportion as we love ourselves truly, and our families, and our brethren, we do pray for God’s blessing upon each and all.

But God has not only given us liberty to pray to Him for those whom we love, He has also given us power to bless them. He has made us stewards of His manifold grace; He has poured out upon us His gifts; He would have us to exercise them. If we love our brethren, we will receive from God with thankfulness the means of blessing them, which He is pleased to bestow. If we reverence God, we shall so use these, that they shall be seen to be His, not ours, and that praise shall redound unto Him and unto us as His stewards. Out of love, let us send up prayers to God for the salvation of His church. Out of love, let us draw down from God His gifts for their edification. Let our prayers ascend through Jesus Christ. Let God’s gifts come down to us by Him, for He is the One

Mediator. He transacts with God on our behalf. He appears for us; He transacts with us for God; He takes care of our interests with God. He takes care of God's honour and service with us. We put our prayers into His hands; into His hands God commits His gifts. The One Mediator saves men and glorifies God. The glory of the double work belongs to Him, in whom the two natures are united. The strength needed for it, and the kingdom which results from it, belong to Him, who reigns as God and as man for ever. In the Epistle, we behold love offering prayers and exercising gifts; the Gospel refers to the double witness, which God would have borne concerning Him, who hath made these things possible. The Epistle shows what we can do, the Gospel Him by whom we do it. The Lord said, the Holy Ghost shall bear witness of Me, the Holy Ghost shall set forth My claims upon the confidence of men; you also shall set them forth. The world denies that I have any claim at all upon its confidence; the world hates Me without a cause; the Holy Ghost shall bear witness that it is without a cause; and you also shall prove that the world has no reason for hating Me. When the Holy Ghost is withheld, when the light which He kindles is quenched, then the claims of Christ upon the confidence of mankind cannot be adequately maintained. When apostles are not allowed to bear their witness and do their work, the cause of Christ is not pleaded before men as it ought to be; the grace of God and the means of grace bring glory to Him, by whom the grace hath appeared. Where these are

absent, He is hidden. Men have a sort of excuse for not acknowledging the worth of Christ, when the means appointed by God for maintaining that worth are not in operation before them. The Gospel for this day proclaims to the children of men: reject not Christ till you have heard His advocates; God hath appointed certain to plead for Him, hear the pleading before you condemn. Consider what the Spirit of God saith concerning Christ, what He worketh in His name, whither He leadeth those who follow Him—before ye reject Christ. Let the holiness, which the Holy Ghost worketh in the church of Christ, be seen. Let the gifts, which He bestoweth upon the body of Christ, be exercised. Let the hopes and aspirations, which He inspirereth, be understood. Let the signs and wonders, which He worketh, be considered, before Christ is rejected. Again, if the world will know what blessings can come to it by Jesus Christ, if men will know that He is indeed the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, then they must receive those whom He hath sent. They must give them liberty to speak and act in His name, who hath sent them. The doctrines which Christ gave His apostles to teach, the sacraments which He appointed them to administer, the grace which He empowered them to dispense, the order which He enabled them to establish, all those things would prove, that men were not justified in hating Christ, but bound by every reason that ought to influence reasonable beings, to love, and accept, and obey Him. He, who could make even now a heaven upon earth by the action of His ordinances, and by the operation of His

Spirit, has every claim upon the confidence of mankind. He, who could work in human society a character, the elements and component parts of which should be love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, He would have every right to claim the recognition and love of men. This character is the fruit of His Spirit. The Spirit of Christ being allowed liberty, being allowed the full and free use of the ordinances of God, the means of God's grace, would produce this result. Men talk of civilization, here is civilization most mature. Education and training for the city of God, which cometh down from heaven to be God's dwelling-place and creation's glory. The fruit of the Spirit is the argument for Christ; let not the judgment be delivered till the argument is heard. When the world, after beholding what the Holy Ghost and the ministers of Christ have wrought for His honour, and spoken in His behalf, shall deliberately reject Him, choosing in His stead the beast out of the bottomless pit, and his prophet the beast out of the earth, who speaketh lies, then will the judgment of God be seen to be just, and the heavens will rejoice that His wrath is come, and that He has arisen to destroy them who would utterly destroy His works.

PENTECOST.

Eph. iv., 4-16; John xiv., 15.

THIS is the Feast of Pentecost. On this day, as it were, the creation of God began. On this day, as it were, that took place which never took place before, and can never be repeated. On this day, as it were, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the incarnate Son, given by the Father, and sent by the Son, came down from heaven to dwell with and in man. On this day, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, the body of Christ, the mystical body of Christ, the church, was formed. On this day that new thing first came into being, the life, the new life, the resurrection life of the incarnate and glorified Son of God, imparted unto men. On this day the incarnate Son, risen to the right hand of God, having received, gave that organization which is His fulness, the fulness (the pleroma) of Him that filleth all in all. On this day mortal, corruptible, sinful man was made partaker of the eternal life of God Incarnate. On this day the Holy Ghost was manifested by *inhabitation*. The Son of God became incarnate, made flesh, the nature of man became His mode of being. The Holy Ghost, coming from Him the Incarnate One, formed

and dwelt in the body of Christ. That body received its form of being and mode of life, its structure and organization on this day, then, and from that day, to have the mind of Christ, to be entrusted with His power, to put forth His energies, to overcome sin, Satan, the world, and hell ; to rise up out of, and above, death, to be filled with thoughts of God, to sit in heavenly places, to resist and finally throw off the corrupt and fallen nature of Adam ; to be heirs of God, and share the kingdom of Christ, to be administrators with Him in the government of God, to rule and judge for and with Christ, to lift up into heaven the worship of all creation, to fill the hands of Him, that sitteth on the throne of God, with that incense which He presents unto God ;—this, and more than all this, and more than heart can conceive, or tongue can express, all this was given, all this is given, all this *is*, by reason of that which took place, as it were, on this day. And of all this we are made partakers.

But where is it ? Where is all that organization and structure ? Where that entire holiness and living in heavenly places ? Where that mighty in-working, those energies of God ? Where that victory over sin, and death, and hell ? Where that unity, and perfection of the one body ? Where are these things, assuredly given, and never taken away ? they never can be taken away from Christ. Where are they to be seen ?

The answer is, they are all but lost ; and in their place, a diminished and altered organization, weakness, division, worldliness, sin, sickness, death,

have come in, and the remembrance of that, which took place at Pentecost, has, come to be little more than an historic fact, a miracle belonging to the past, instead of the joyful commemoration of a present heavenly condition. But the long-suffering of God is salvation. Eighteen centuries of wandering from God's way and forgetfulness of, or short views of what the ascended Lord did on this day, God has over-ruled to bring about His purposes of mercy and grace. And now, at the close of the day, or rather when the night is far spent, when the day-star arises, when the day dawns, God brings us to know, and acknowledge from whence we have fallen, to confess and repent: to confess that "all we like sheep, have gone astray," that we have far wandered from our Father's house, and fed on husks; and this is the sign, this is the proof, the sure proof to them that receive it, that God has arisen to bless, to deliver, and to establish the "counsel of His heart, which standeth for ever." God in His wonderful working, when no heart thought of it, and no skill of man devised it, brings us back to Pentecost, and once more, as of old, however weakly, (and who is not weak?) the order, and the form, and the ordinances, and the ministries, and the gifts, yea, and faith in our standing, and hope of being speedily gathered to the Lord—these bestowed at Pentecost, are once more in measure revived; the first-fruits are being sealed, the gathering of the harvest is at hand, and the day of redemption, the restitution of all things is nigh, even at the doors. Jesus the Lord gave us, on this day, by the gift of the Holy Ghost, that fourfold ministry, by

which alone the church can be perfected, the body edified. That gift never passes away, and now He once more brings into operation that, which abides for ever in Him because of His unchangeable priesthood, without which the church can never be perfected, or arrive at the perfect stature of Christ.

Let us then rise up in faith to the blessedness of Pentecost. Let us rejoice that in being brought back, as it were, to that which was given at Pentecost, we have the pledge and the assurance of being gathered speedily to Him, who is our life and our Lord, when we, with all those who have departed in the faith, shall have our common perfecting in bliss, even in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Eph. iv., 4-16; John xiv., 15.

THE Gospel for this day records the promise of the Christian dispensation—the Epistle gives the narrative of its fulfilment. The Gospel also lays down the conditions under which the promise should be fulfilled—the Epistle details the manner of the fulfilment, and the issues in which it should result. The promise of the Christian dispensation is the gift of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost; the conditions, upon which He is bestowed, are the love of Jesus Christ and observance of His commandments. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may

abide with you for ever. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings; *but* if a man love Me, he will keep My words, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” To love Christ is the first qualification for receiving the Holy Ghost; to mind His words and charges is the second. These things do not absolutely, and as a matter of course, go together. A man may have love, and yet be not sufficiently heedful; he may not make himself as thoroughly acquainted as he ought to do, with the constitution of Christ’s church and the many charges, which Christ has left behind Him concerning His church and His kingdom. On the other hand, great gifts of knowledge may be possessed by the unloving, and Christ’s words may be remembered well by those, who seek to build up by them their own glory, and not the glory of Him who spake them. There is, therefore, great significance in the double condition. We must love the Lord, and have words of His to carry out into execution—not traditions of men, nor fancies of our own. The Holy Spirit loves Him, in whose name He is sent. He knows what He wills to have done, and labours to bring it to pass. Those to whom the Holy Spirit comes, and with whom He can abide, must sympathize with Him in feeling, and be one with Him in purpose and in understanding. How can two walk together, unless they are agreed? If the church is

straining after one result, and the Holy Ghost is labouring for another, they must sooner or later part company. When the Holy Ghost descended from heaven, from the right hand of God, on the day of Pentecost, He came down upon a company of men and women, who loved the Lord Jesus Christ, who had heard His sayings, and were gathered together in faith of His word. They were in the clearest light which belonged to their day. They had heard and received the last interpretation of His word, which God had been pleased to give. The scriptures of truth had been opened to them by the Word incarnate. They were prepared to receive the Spirit of truth. The preparation in the beginning, allowing for change of circumstances, has been the preparation in every age of the church since that time, and will be the preparation to the end of the age. Those who love the Lord, who "have and keep His words," are the chosen people, in whom the Spirit of God can dwell, by whom He can manifest His power.

The Gospel declares the conditions, upon which the gift is bestowed—the Epistle details the results, which should follow the bestowment. He gave His gifts unto His church to bring us all, from the beginning to the end of the dispensation, into unity in two things, "into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God." However else we may be differenced from one another physically, mentally, socially, nationally, in two things we must agree—in trusting in the Son of God, and in knowing Him in whom we trust—trusting in Him to begin with, and then becoming acquainted with

Him in all the relations, which He sustains towards us as Son of God, that our trust in Him may grow and be enlarged continually. If the means appointed by God to enable us to believe in His Son, and to know Him, be disesteemed and rejected, faith in Him will die out, and knowledge of Him will vanish away. To those, who should receive the Comforter, the Lord said, “The world seeth Me no more” after My departure from it. “Ye see Me, because I live, ye shall live also. At that day, ye shall *know* that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.” Men, who will not receive the gift, which God bestowed when He constituted the dispensation, and receive it as He bestowed it, will not be able to keep alive “the faith and knowledge of the Son of God.” The world, by wisdom, could not attain to the knowledge of God; the world, by wisdom, *cannot* retain that knowledge after it has been bestowed. We all believe in the Son of God, and know Him in order to our becoming *one* body. God chose one nation of old to be His witness. He now chooses one body out of all nations; one body, to be the fulness of one Head. To that one nation He gave His holy law, and in the midst of it did set His visible glory. To the one body He has given one Spirit, even the Holy Ghost, to be at once a living law and a glorious manifestation. The one body, filled with the one Spirit, has one hope. The hope is one, whether it be reached through resurrection or translation. It is the hope of being perfected, as the one Lord has been perfected, who, being Himself first perfected as Lord and Commander, leads all who follow

Him unto perfection. He will in due time change their body of humiliation, and make it like unto the body of His own glory, by His mighty power, whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. There is one faith, by which we all cleave to our one Lord, whilst He administers to us that baptism, whereby is effected our separation from the world and our entire consecration unto God, that He might be above us, and through us, and in us, who is above us and through us, that He may ultimately, and for ever, dwell in us. The power for this consummation, and for more than by thought can be conceived, or by tongue expressed, we hold in that blessed bestowment from God, which we this day commemorate. Let us seek to prove to the uttermost the provision for our blessing contained in the wondrous gift of God our Father and of Jesus Christ, exalted to God's right hand. We are not straitened in God—His Spirit remains with us. By Him let us grow up into the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase unto the edifying of itself in love.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Rev. iv. ; John iii., 1-18.

THERE is a greater connexion between the Epistle and Gospel of the day, than we might at first be disposed to think. The Epistle gives a prophetic view of the church in its true and perfect condition, of the church, when her ministers, her representatives, her rulers, bring up and offer honour and worship and glory to Him, for whom and by whom are all things. The Gospel tells us of the *source* and *fountain*, the very origin and beginning of the church's existence. The one teaches that which constitutes the church. The other teaches us, what that constitution is in its perfection and operation.

They speak of *grace* and *glory*, reminding us that "Grace is glory in the *bud*, and glory is grace in the *blossom*." They both speak of *regeneration*. Regeneration as it begins in the *man*, the individual—Regeneration as it begins at the *font*. Regeneration as it is perfected in the body.—Regeneration as it is consummated when the twelve sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes. The one speaks of regeneration by water and the Holy Ghost. The other shows

the regenerate before the throne. The sum and substance of both is the *new creation*, “ Except a man be born from above he cannot see, cannot enter into the kingdom.”

In the kingdom, to give honour and glory to Him, that sitteth on the throne, is the one end of their entering into it. The subject then for our meditation is the *regeneration*. If there be one thing more than another, that distinguishes and characterizes the work, which God has wrought in these last days, it is this, that it teaches us *what regeneration is*, both as to the *present* and as to the *future*. We *are* regenerate, because we have received a new life, a life from above, by water and the Holy Ghost. In baptism is that life given. In confirmation, (or “ laying on of hands,”) that life is endowed with gifts, and empowered to serve. In the Holy Communion, the communion of one bread and one cup, that one life is invigorated, nourished. By the word of Christ is that life guarded, sustained, guided, preserved. By-and-bye this life, this new life, this life from above, comes to maturity in the *regeneration*. Now it is regenerated *through* faith, now it is in *hope*, now with all things against it, now with flesh and blood, with the world and Satan against it. *Then* all things for and with it, “ Behold I create all things new.”

Now it is a *hidden* life, “ hid with Christ in God, but when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory,” in the *regeneration*.

Whence comes all this? Is it a mere doctrine? a *theory*, a *system*, an *idea*?—No; but a *fact*, a *reality*.

Brethren, you are *in* Christ ; you are *one* with Christ ; His life is your life ; His God your God ; His Father your Father, bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh, *one* with Him, Jesus and His body, Christ. What is baptism ? Do you know what it is ? Do you believe what it is ? Do you realize it ? you can only realize it by faith.

Everything around you denies your baptism, tempts you to deny it. Flesh and blood love sin. The world passes away—corruption, change, sorrow, death, meet you everywhere. Everything tries to make you feel, make you remember you are *mortal*. Well, be it so. But you are *very members*, *very members* of *His body*. *His* one mystical body, who is seated at the right hand of God. God is ever seeking to make you remember you are regenerate, possessors even now of *eternal* life. Which will you give heed to ? To the flesh, which tells you you are *mortal*, perishable, sinful, and *therefore* cries for *indulgence* ; or to God, who tells you you are possessed, already possessed, of *eternal* life, are *one with Christ*, are *very members* of Christ, and bids you wait, long, cry for, expect the day, when in the *regeneration* the *whole family* of God, headed up in the twenty-four elders, shall worship Him, that sitteth on the throne. You *are* regenerate, you *are born* from above, you can see, you can enter into the kingdom. Therefore, wait, expect the *regeneration*, “ the new heavens and the new earth,” expect your Lord, say with meaning, say from your *heart of hearts* this day at His altar—“ Hasten, O God, the time, when Thou shalt send from Thy right hand,

Him, whom Thou wilt send," Him, whom the heavens must retain until the restitution of all things.

Bear about then the continual remembrance that you are *regenerate*—"born from above"—that you are now, even now, partakers of the life of Christ. And wait, and hope, and expect the time of the *regeneration*, which shall be brought at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Rev. iv. ; John iii., 1-18.

THIS week, following upon that of Pentecost, is dedicated to the contemplation of the mystery of the blessed Trinity in Unity, for in the church, the body of Christ, that mystery is made manifest. That which is true now or at any time of God, of the Divine Nature, of the blessed Trinity in Unity, that is to say of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or of the respective relations of each one to each of the others of the glorious and adorable Persons, must of necessity have been always true, and ever will be true, because God is and must be unchangeable. But this mystery never could have been known, either to angels or to men, except as it is revealed by God Himself. God is not comprehensible by any creature, no one by searching can find Him out, It is probable also, that however God may have foreshadowed the future manifestation of the mystery, either to angels or to men, either by symbols or by words of prophets, inspired by the Holy Ghost, it was

not plainly discovered, or discoverable, even by angels, until the Word of God Incarnate arose from the dead, and was glorified by God the Father, through the gift of the Holy Ghost, the promise of the Father. Then was it, that the Son of God Incarnate was seen to be the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Then was He seen to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person, then was He manifested to be the Heir of all things, Lord and Christ. Then was it, that in bringing in the First-begotten from the dead into the world, God said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." Thus the mystery was made known to angels and to men, when the Holy Ghost came down and united the believers unto their Lord in one body.

In the passage of the Apocalypse read this day for the Epistle, this revelation of God is elucidated, for in it we have a symbolical representation of the church of the first-born in the court or palace of the heavenly Jerusalem, the true Zion, the true heavenly city of the great King, the tabernacle of the Lord God Almighty and of the Lamb, and in which the throne of God and of the Lamb is founded and established for ever. For the church is the habitation and the temple of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In coming thither, we come to God the Judge of all, visible only in His Incarnate Son; we come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and we come by the Holy Ghost, through whom we are lifted up into these heavenly places, and have our part therein. There is that One, that sitteth on the throne, there are the four-and-twenty Elders seated on thrones

within the circle of the throne of God, the symbol of those whom God and Christ choose from among men to be His assessors, in eternal rule and judgment. There are the seven lamps before the throne, the symbol of that consuming fire and Spirit of God, by which the heavens and earth, that now are, shall be baptized and purged from the sins of angels and of men, and out of it the new creation shall emerge, welded and constituted a living whole, fit for the habitation of God through the Spirit. There also is the sea of glass, the symbol of that heavenly life in which all the sons of God partake in one body ; there are those four living ones, the symbols of that four-fold action, inward and outward, by which inwardly the life of the body is to be maintained and circulated, and outwardly is to be exhibited and exercised towards all the creatures of God. Whilst around all angels of God, inhabitants of heaven, and all creatures on earth, and under the earth, and in the sea, no longer vainly seeking to search into the mysteries of God—shall behold the glorious exhibition of them, when God's full purpose shall be accomplished, and beholding, shall worship and give glory. As in the Person of Christ so in His body, the church, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, our God reveals Himself, and if we are to believe as sundry passages of Scripture and perhaps the passage read for our Epistle, would seem to convey, that the holy angels themselves are organized, and ordered, and sub-ordinated among themselves in some way similar to the organization of the church, that very order will have prepared those blessed spirits to rejoice in the manifes-

tation in the church of the mystery of God, of the Father and of Christ, and to recognize that manifold wisdom, which by the church is made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. It is made known to the blessed angels by the church. Any similar organization among themselves comes short of this mystery of the gospel in the church, for Christ took not on Him the nature of angels, nor identified Himself with them, nor brought them into union with God by uniting them to Himself as members of one body, partaking of one life and spirit by the Holy Ghost. This further mystery, the source and origin of the church is revealed and treated of in the Gospel of the day. The Lord in his subsistence as Man was limited in knowledge, yet was He conscious, that though Man He is God. He knew in Himself, that He had come down from heaven, He knew the heavenly things, He knew that He is abiding in heaven, yea that He is God, infinite and incomprehensible, filling all with His presence and power. He knew, that the earthly substance He had taken, must be put off in death, suffered for our sins, and resumed and changed into the heavenly, for our salvation. He knew, that He who had come down from heaven must ascend thither again, and then should be brought to pass that of which He spake to Nicodemus ; and by the spirit given Him from the Father and sent down by Him, He would quicken those whom the Father would give to Him, unite them to Himself, and constitute them in Himself in one body, an habitation of God through the Spirit. Thus in the Gospel we are taught the source and origin of the

mystery of Christ in the church, the blessed work of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and in the Epistle we are presented with a vision of the ultimate result—the new Jerusalem, the bride of the Lamb, the tabernacle and dwelling place of God.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

I John iv., 7; Luke xvi., 19.

THE shout of triumph, which heralds the coming round of the joyful feast of Pentecost, has ceased to peal in our ears ; the hallelujahs which accompany the hymn to the Holy Ghost, whom we invited to come with His benign influence and visit the souls of the believers, have been re-echoed on the octave of the holy feast, and are heard no more : and now a voice is lifted up, the voice of one, who has grown old in his Master's service, who has outlived all his fellow labourers, and has had vouchsafed to him glimpses of the glory of the invisible, revelations of the holy city, the dwelling place of the Most High, of the triumph of the saints and of the glorious dignity of the queen, the bride of the Lamb. And his voice is raised, not to proclaim the glorious visions, with which he has been visited, not to tell of the triumphs of the saints over their enemies and over the enemies of God, nor of the dignity of the bride of the Lamb, but to exhort us to love one another. " Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God. Everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God, He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love."

This Epistle following upon the celebration of Pentecost, seems to point us to the more excellent way. The way of love and charity, without which the best gifts, the most excellent endowments are vain; without which, as Paul tells us, we are nothing. It is as though we were reminded, that the only worthy motive, which could actuate us in the exercise of more heavenly gifts, of which the Pentecostal endowment was the first-fruits, is love, that love is the cement of the building of God, and the mainspring of all our actions towards God and man.

What avails power, or the most excellent gifts, or knowledge without love? Love to God first, and then love to our neighbour proceeding from this source. This epistle of John the beloved disciple is perhaps the most difficult to comprehend of any of the epistles, simply on this account—that He who had so richly experienced the love of God about which he delighted to discourse, was speaking from the heart, and not from the head, was relating, what he felt and knew by experience rather than from theory. His words are so simple, that they will hardly bear being paraphrased, and yet so weighty, that their deep import can never be fully searched out. His words are as milk for the babe, and meat for the strong man. “I write to you little children,” he says, “because your sins are forgiven you for His name’s sake.” “I write to you young men, because ye are strong and have overcome the wicked one.” “I write to you old men, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning.” And his words are the same to

all. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God."

The babes in Christ lisping out their first words should say, "Beloved, let us love one another." The Christian warriors fighting side by side against the world, the flesh, and the devil, should encourage one another with the same words. The grey-headed saints, who have warred a good warfare and kept the faith, and are expecting the time of their departure, while speaking out their experience of the deep things of God, can say no more as the result of their life-long experience than this, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God."

But the apostle goes on to tell us what love is based on, and what are the fruits of that love, which is the theme of His discourse. "Herein is love," he says, "not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

God's love is shown in this, that He sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

We know that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, we know that Jesus is the Son of God, and therefore we know the measure of God's love, or rather we know that that love is without measure, and we love God who hath so loved us, and dwell in Him, because we dwell in love. We repose in His love as children repose in the love of their mothers, we put all our confidence in Him. "God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The knowledge of this gives us not only present confidence, but also takes away that

fear which hath torment, that unholy fear, which cannot consist with perfect confidence. How easy it is to say, "I believe that my sins are forgiven," how few there are that fully realize that God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. There is a day of judgment coming, a day which is full of terrors to the guilty conscience, a day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. Who can look forward to that day without fear? Only they who know and have experienced those words, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Only they who, abiding in the love of God, can discard all fear, for fear hath torment, and he who feareth is not made perfect in love—perfect love casteth out fear—perfect love to God results from the knowledge of His love to us. And the knowledge of this love in its full extent alone can give us boldness in the day of judgment.

The Epistle contains the perfect profession of a Christian. I know the love of God. I know Jesus to be the Son of God. I know that God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. I know that all He did, His life and death, and His resurrection from the dead, are alike the expression of the love of the Father to usward. This knowledge is the joy of the child, the support of the strong man, the consolation of him that is old and grey-headed. This knowledge alone takes away the fear that is with torment, and gives confidence in the day of judgment. The prayer of the apostle Paul to the Ephesians was, that they being rooted and

grounded in love, might comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God.

What would this world of ours be, if we all were to give heed to those words, " Beloved, let us love one another!" What form of evil is there that does not arise from the want of love ?

The new commandment given by our Lord, was that we should love one another as He has loved us. Shall we ever see the time when, being sincere in love, we may grow up unto Him in all things, who is the Head, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love? We shall see it when we learn to love one another.

In this holy feast we have a continual pledge and assurance of this love of God, who sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. We show forth His death, who was sent to be the Saviour of the world. While we obey His commandment in thus showing forth His death as the pledge of God's love, let us remember the commandment, that he, who loves God, love his brother also.

Let us bear in mind that the disciple, whom Jesus loved, who leaned upon the breast of his Master and his God, who enjoyed his confidence as none others did, who saw the mighty labours of Paul come to an end, and Peter's holy zeal triumph in his death upon the cross ; who saw the first palmy days of the church,

when she was full of power and came behind in no gift, who witnessed the beginning of the falling away, and was himself rejected by those, who loved the pre-eminence. Let us bear in mind that his last words were: " Beloved, let us love one another."

I John iv., 7; Luke xvi., 19.

" **G**OD is Love. In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. *God is Love*, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Let us love one another, for love is of God. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

There is no lesson more difficult to learn, none more repugnant to the heart of man, than to have faith, real, abiding faith, in the *love of God*. It is comparatively easy to believe in the justice, the strict justice, and even the wrath of God. The terrors of God have a certain charm for the unrenewed heart of man. Man naturally invests his idea of God with the awful sanctions of law, of power, and retribution. Man is content to hear of the holiness, the justice, and even the severity of God. And why? just because it puts a *distance* between him and God. Nothing but divine grace can persuade the heart of man of the love of God; it is the last thing he

wishes to think of, to hear of, or to believe. And yet it is by the knowledge of, and faith in, the love of God, that God wins the sinner, or perfects the saint. Only as, and just as, the love of God, the love, which is from and of God, is “shed abroad in our hearts;” only thus can we serve God in this life, or the life that is to come; we are only, and so much, in harmony with God, as God’s love finds an echo in our hearts; when we love God, when we love Him because He first loved us.

Want of love to God keeps us at a distance from God; want of love is want of confidence, and we cannot approach one, in whom we have not confidence; *we only have love to God as we have faith in His love.* Herein lies the difficulty, and yet here we must begin, and thither we must ever recur. God would persuade us of His love in order that, being persuaded in the very depth of our being of His love, we may unreservedly and entirely give ourselves—our whole heart—ourselves to Him; we are perfected, when His love is perfected in us. “Perfect love casteth out fear.” There is no fear in love. Now how does God seek to gain our love? By bringing to us, bringing to our hearts, by the Holy Ghost, the wonderful incomprehensible truth, that “God so loved the world, that He gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” No words of man can explain, no heart of man can comprehend the wonderful mystery, that God, the eternal God, the Creator, should have *such* love, such an eternity of love for the creature, which his hand had made, that for that creature, which had fallen away from Him, which had refused to confide in Him, which

had preferred the counsel of the devil to the will and the command and the wisdom of God,—that creature who had imbibed the deadly poison of hatred to God,—that He should *so, so* love that creature, that the Father should give,—give, give up, sacrifice, forego, not withhold His beloved Son,—that the Son should invest Himself with the very nature of that creature who hated God, and by death atone for, expiate the guilt of the apostate creature, and attaining to glory in that invested nature should take up the fallen creature, thus redeemed, into corporate-union with Himself. He the Head, we the members of one body. That God should, yea, that God *could* so love the world, no tongue can explain, no heart can comprehend, yet it is true—we know it to be true—and in the innermost shrine, in the spirit of man it has a reality, that can make him trust in, love, and delight in God.

Oh the wonderful way God has taken, whereby the rebellious might be brought back! God seeks to make us believe in His love—“to know and believe the love that God hath to us.” How wonderful it seems! The Creator trying to persuade the creature of His love! And this, too, in order to gain *our* love; we love Him because He first loved us. Now if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another, for if we love God, we shall love one another. If a man say he loves God and hateth his brother, he is a liar; it is the commandment we have received from Him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also. If we love God, we shall love the children of God; we shall love that which He loveth.

If God so loved us we ought also to love one another. This love, the love of God, the love of the children of God, the love of Him that begot, and of those begotten, is a gift of God by the Holy Ghost given unto us: and that in answer to the prayer of Jesus, who said, "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world," and desired that the love, wherewith the Father loved Him, might be in them, and He in them.

Seek then, brethren, that the love of God may abide with and abound in you. Love *for* God, the love *of* God, the love of the children of God. Keep yourselves in the love of God, go not from His love; let that love be shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost. Learn more and more to *confide* in the love of your God, in that love which gave His Son to be the propitiation for your sins, and therefore ever keep your consciences cleansed from sin by the blood of the Lamb. Ever turn to Him, when burdened with the sense of sin, when troubled or cast down, when tried and tempted, when way-worn and wearied in heart from the length of the day, turn to Him, whose love changeth not, to Him who solaced Himself in the love of the Father, and shares that love with us.

And now when we are about to draw near to that holy altar, when we bring before God the death of His Son, the manifestation of His Son, when we hear Him say "Take, eat, this is my body, given for you," be filled, seek to be filled with the fulness of His love. Put away all fear, which hath torment, and abide in His love, keeping His commandments, and this is His command-

ment, that we love one another. Filled with the sense of God's love, and filled with the love of God, seek to love one another—seek that love, which is without partiality, without hypocrisy—seek that love, that charity, which seeketh not her own, which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, which never faileth, which endureth, when prophecies shall fail and tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall vanish away. Building yourselves up in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

I John iii., 13; Luke xiv., 16-24.

THE apostle John is spoken of as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” who leaned on his Master’s breast at that last supper, and who seemed to enjoy in an extraordinary degree the confidence of his Lord, so that when the disciples wished to ascertain, who the traitor was who should betray Him, they set John to ask the question. It has been assumed, and taken for granted, that John’s character was particularly soft and mild, that his words were smooth, and that there was in him the absence of anything savouring of strictness or severity; and yet the consideration of the tenour of the general epistle of John, from which the Epistle for this day is taken, would scarcely justify this supposition. The name given by our Lord to James and John, his brother, namely, Boanerges, sons of thunder, would hardly indicate this peculiar mildness of character, which has been attributed to the disciple whom Jesus loved. Indeed, he seems rather to have been distinguished on account of his great zeal for truth in doctrine, for his unflinching advocacy of blamelessness in walk and conversation. He uses the most forcible language in his

uncompromising condemnation of everything, that is contrary to truth and righteousness. His assertions touching our standing in Christ, and the assurance which we ought to have towards God, are of the most decided character. In his writings we find the line between good and evil most clearly drawn; his statement of the standing of the Christian, of his privileges, of his duties, and of his responsibilities, is clear and definite, and he will not abate one jot from the full measure. Our fellowship, he says, is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. The blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin; if we say we have no sin, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. The same forcible expression he makes use of regarding those, who say they know Him, and keep not His commandments. He that abideth in Him, he declares, ought also so to walk even as He walked. He writes to all who are in Christ; to the little children, whose sins are forgiven them, for His name's sake, and who have known the Father; to the young men, who are strong in the Lord, and who have His word abiding in them, and have overcome the evil one; and to the fathers, who have known Him that is from the beginning. And his word is the same to all. Love not the world, or you cannot love the Father; the lust of the world, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life all pass away. There are many anti-christs, who went out from us, because they were not of us. They

are self-manifested by going out from us. Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things; the anointing ye have received, teaches you all things. I write to you not because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and no lie is of the truth. Now are we the sons of God, and we know not yet, what we shall be, but we shall be like Him when He appeareth. Let no man deceive you; he who is of God, sinneth not. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous; he that committeth sin is of the devil. He, who is born of God, doth not commit sin; he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

Such is the general tone of the Epistle, such is the character of the expressions used in that portion of it, which precedes the part selected for the Epistle for the day, which begins in the same positive tone. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know, that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death; whoso hateth his brother is a murderer, and no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. But it is not enough to talk of love. Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, and whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His com-

mandments, and do those things which are pleasing in His sight.

And now, beloved, I commend to you the consideration of this general Epistle, and of the character of the writings of this, the disciple whom Jesus loved—his zeal for truth and sound doctrine, his uncompromising condemnation of all evil, his strict persistence in asserting the holiness of our calling, the need of purity, in insisting on the power which is given us to withstand all sin, to walk even as Jesus walked, his constant declaration of the reality, the virtue, the efficacy of the anointing which we have received, his constant reference to that full assurance, which belongs to those who know God, who love God, who show that love by loving their brethren also. We learn from him the entire antagonism between the love of the world and the love of God; the subtle actings, the secret power and influence of the devil, exercised upon those who, in any measure, depart from their standing in Christ. “We know,” he says in concluding the Epistle, “that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one. We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” The consideration of these points, the meditation upon this Epistle, which may well be called a touchstone of Christianity, will be beneficial to us all, and serve as a test of our sincerity, for nothing that is hollow can stand such a proof as these words, rightly laid to heart, will subject us to. To understand them after a fleshly manner would set us all

railing one against another, judging one another, using harsh words against one another, smiting each other with the tongue. To meditate on them in the Spirit will result in our attaining to that measure, which we are called to attain unto, in our realizing the fellowship which we have with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ ; will enable us to distinguish between the light and the darkness, to detect and abjure the workings of Satan, and to repose our whole confidence in Him, who died for our sins, who rose again for our justification, who hath given us the anointing of the Holy Ghost, which teacheth us all things, which is the truth, and no lie. It will enable us to distinguish between the false and the true, between theoretical and practical religion, to draw near to the table of the Lord in that full confidence, which belongs to those who know their adoption, to draw near in the fulness of that spiritual joy, which is our strength in the conflict which we have to wage against the world, the flesh, and the devil. It will give us confidence when we draw near, to ask and receive, because we keep His commandments, and do those things which please Him. The substance of what we learn in this Epistle may thus be summed up. We are in Him ; God has given us of His Spirit. We love God, we love our brother also. The world hateth us, but we marvel not at this. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. Our love is made perfect. We know that God dwelleth in us, and we in God. Having this knowledge, we shall have confidence in the day of

judgment. Beloved, let us meditate on these things; let us look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein; let us not be forgetful hearers, but doers of the word, and we shall be blessed in our deed.

I John iii., 13; Luke xiv., 16-24.

ALL the graces of the Spirit are in harmony one with the other, and in dwelling upon any one in particular, we should be careful to give it its due place, without exalting it so as to depreciate its sister graces, for *faith* and *hope* must ever be in exercise in the heart of the Christian, while *love* is that, which not only cements together every other grace and gift, but binds into one the whole body of Christ.

Doctrine is good, forms are good, organization is good; but if love be absent, they will all fail to fit and prepare the church for the presence of her Lord.

The apostle John, in this Epistle, makes the possession of *brotherly love* the very test of life. "We know that we have passed from *death* to *life*, because we *love* the brethren; he that loveth not his brother abideth in *death*." He is without the evidence that he is of the one family of Christ; brethren of one family love one another. There may be exceptions, but the principle is universally recognized, and the breach of it brings reproach. The loving family then aptly shows what the family of Christ should be—*one* united by love.

The apostle puts in strong contrast the opposite feeling, *hatred*; saying, Whoso *hateth* his brother is a *murderer*. There is something very solemn in this contrast, almost implying, that the absence of *love* involves the presence of *hatred*. The mere *nominal* Christian would shrink from the supposed possibility of his becoming a murderer, but the Lord searcheth the heart, and searcheth it by His word, and he knows the possibility of an indulged dislike growing into aversion, and then the tempter may come in and make dislike and aversion become hatred, and hatred is murder in the heart. This is the negative argument or a warning to us all, to put away every thought and feeling towards a brother, that is contrary to love.

Then we are taught, that the test of love is not in *word*, but in *deed*, and that its highest expression is a willingness to lay down our lives for our brethren, and our Lord Jesus Christ is set before us as our bright example of love. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." Marvellous truth! And the example carries us to a wider circle even than the family of Christ. He constituted and counted Himself the *Brother of man*, and in love laid down His life for *man*, for his brethren of mankind. There is more implied in laying down the life than mere death, there is a dying daily to self, and to the world, that we may be devoting our lives for the benefit of the church, and of the Lord. Our first and prime duty is the dedication of ourselves to Christ, in His church; and this is especially our duty as gathered

under apostles. The Lord has shown us, that the work which He has in His hand at this time, is the gathering a remnant out of the baptized; He would fain they should *all* come; there is room and to spare, and the invitation is to all the baptized. The Lord would wind up His account with Christendom; afterwards, when His ancient people shall be restored, He will deal with the nations of the world; so that while working for the church, we are working for the Jews and for the world, for the fulness of the Gentiles. The Gentile church must *first* come in, and then the *Jew* be restored, and then the *world* be blessed. Glorious hope! we carry it with us daily; that even in the resurrection, or glorified bodies, we shall have a share in the labour of accomplishing this end. Let us seek for grace and love to do our present work faithfully, and the way set before us as a token of the possession of love, and the way of its expression, is the showing of God's bounty to us with our poor brethren. Let us delight to be the almoners of God's bounty, and learn the true value of riches, of whatever gift we may be endowed with, by its free distribution and exercise. There are two blessed consequences arising from loving the brethren and manifesting that love in acts. It brings the blessed assurance into our hearts that we are of the truth, and induces holy confidence towards God. Such assurance and confidence, every believer should desire to possess; it is a testimony that we please God.

And another blessing follows, viz., that we are enabled to pray with the confidence, that we shall have what we

ask. What more can we desire? Let us then seek grace to obey the two commandments appended to these encouraging instructions, viz., to believe on the name of Jesus Christ, and to *love* one another. This makes *faith* and *love* no mere matter of choice, but duties, in obedience to the *commandments* of God.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1 Pet. v., 5-11; Luke xv., 1-10.

PRIDE is the original sin in Satan and in man, and is the root of all sin. Humility is the beginning of holiness, the first stage in our redemption, and the abiding condition of the saved. Pride was the cause of the fall of Satan, and of the fall of man. Humility is the cause of man's exaltation. Pride comes before a fall ; humility before honour. The devil exalteth himself, the eternal Son humbled Himself. Adam sought to exalt himself ; the Son of God, being made *man*, humbled Himself. Christ emptied Himself of all His power and glory, for the glory of God ; antichrist will fill himself with evil power to exalt himself against God. Pride lifts itself against all God's ordinances ; humility stoops down reverently before all God's ordinances. Pride refuses to receive through God's ordinances grace and mercy ; and to receive favours from men ; humility gratefully receives from God and from men, and gives thanks to God and to men, the kind instruments of God's kindness. Pride lifts itself up against the aged, and the noble, and the superior ; humility is reverent to them. Pride is resentful when God or man withholds, or discontinues to

give what has hitherto been conceded ; humility submits, and ceases not to remember benefits received, and to give thanks, saying, the Lord gave, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord. Pride vaunteth itself ; humility hideth itself. Pride is rough and rude ; humility does not behave itself unseemly. Pride is sycophantic when it suits it to be so ; humility is always dignified. Pride neglects prayer, or lifts up unholy hands in wrath with the brethren, or lays out money in dress and furniture, beyond moderation. Humility prays always, and for all. Pride casts off the lost sheep, neglects the lost money ; humility seeks them diligently, and rejoices over them when found. Pride, if the lost return, would give them a lower place when found ; humility gives them the highest place when found. Pride would not allow Mary to touch our Lord's feet ; the Meek One, at His resurrection, sought her the first, and gave her the first place in honourable mention. Pride says, "I thank thee, O God, I am better than others, I am neither a thief, nor an adulterer, I pay my tithes." Take heed we do not say it, "I thank God I am neither a thief like the Protestants, nor an adulterer like the Roman Catholics, I pay my tithes." Humility confesses sin and says, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Pride seeketh to reign on the earth now. Humility seeketh to raise the dead, and to see Peter and Paul in their places. Pride says, I am Christ's vicar, and will work deliverance on the earth. Humility says, We have wrought no deliverance on the earth, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Pride says in each of the sects of

Christendom, "we are not one with the whole body, nor share in its sins ; we are right." Humility recognizes the oneness of the baptized, and the common sin. Pride refuses to acknowledge the oneness of flesh, of the humanity with all men. Humility acknowledges it, and feels, and laments, and confesses the common sin.

There are three things, for which the Lord is anointed with the oil of joy above His fellows—meekness, truth, and righteousness (Ps. 45). " Seek meekness, seek righteousness, it may be that ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's fierce anger " (Zeph. ii., 3). *It may be.* It is a thing not granted to all God's people, to be hid in the day of His anger, but to those, who shall be accounted worthy to escape the things, that are coming to pass. It is granted to those, who will come under the Lord's order, submit themselves, range themselves under His ordinances. The meaning of the Greek word in this our Epistle of to-day, is, " place yourselves in order, under someone, be ye all subject one to another." The devil is the proud spirit; antichrist, the proud man; he is king over all the children of pride. The characteristic of the middle ages, of the *latter times*, was pride in ordinances. The characteristic of the *last days*, is pride; insubordination to all ordinances, heady, high-minded, disobedient to parents. Christ raises up His testimony against all this abuse of ordinances, against all pride in ordinances, against all insubordination to ordinances, against every thing that exalts itself, by His work. Pride refuses to obey the word of command, " fall in," which word has come to the broken army; humility

obeys, and “ falls in.” Resist the devil, who will tempt your pride in a thousand ways ; he will tempt you to resist God, to be insubordinate to your elders, in every sense of that word ; to seek to be rich ; to be proud of being put in an ordinance ; to say to sinners, stand off, I am holier than thou. Seek meekness, seek righteousness, that is, wisdom. Let those who are younger, submit to those who are elder ; children to parents, wives to husbands, servants to masters, subjects to kings, people to priests. Let those, who are in office, submit one to the other. Let them remember also, that in all ministry they are deacons, servants. There are differences of ministrations, service. Who is sufficient for these things ? not proud man, but Christ Jesus, who humbled Himself. Therefore we seek to Him to-day, to be in us to do these things, we seek the communion of the body and the blood of Christ ; we confess our shortcoming in this very matter, we offer the sacrifice that we may, through the one sacrifice, which we memorialize, receive the forgiveness of all our pride. We seek to receive in the holy communion, Him who is meek, that we may be humble too, for He alone in us, can make us meek and humble. Rejoice in Him, rejoice in being made low ; in all disappointments, in all trials, in all mortifications, in all frustrated hopes—they are the necessary preludes to exaltation. And now unto Him, who, for our sakes, humbled Himself, and was made low, and is now exalted high over all, and who, after we have suffered awhile that we may learn to be humble, will exalt us also, with Himself, unto Him be glory, dominion, honour and praise by the church for ever.

I Pet. v., 5-11; Luke xv., 1-10.

IT is characteristic of sheep, that they will follow any one who will lead, and so long as they follow together, they are easily watched and preserved from danger. When the flock is scattered, the individual sheep wanders on the dark mountains, and is in danger of being lost.

And you, the sheep of the Lord's pasture, He bids you, all of you, to be subject, without partialities or personal preferences, one to another. Only, as the old Greek fathers were fond of expressing it, you are His reasonable sheep; not silly, thoughtless creatures following the tinkling bell, because it strikes upon the senses; and, therefore, He bids you to submit yourselves the younger to the *elder*, the deacon to the *priest*, as some have interpreted the passage, the flock to the shepherds, both to the under-shepherds, and in submitting yourselves to the under-shepherds, to Him that is the chief Shepherd, who gives His name, His authority, His presence, to the rest. Nay, more, because His name is upon each, and each has his place in which honour is due to each, therefore He adds, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another." Submit yourselves, not of constraint, because you feel compelled, but submit yourselves from the principle of humility deeply rooted within, because you are clothing yourselves in a vesture

of humility, that meek and quiet spirit breathing in your words, expressed in your actions, and regulating your whole deportment.

In thus submitting yourselves, in thus committing yourselves to those who are over you, as sheep to the shepherd's care, you yield to the hand of God stretched forth to bring you near to Himself. Satan is prowling about as a roaring lion; if he can find you wandering, he will make you his prey; he does not suffer you now to hear his roar; he whispers gently and cunningly enough, "Why submit yourself to your fellow-man? Are not you as good as he? Will you sacrifice your independence? Will you give up your manhood to a priest? Are you not able to guide yourself? Can he guide you better, than you can guide yourself? How should he know how to guide you? Does he know you as well as you know yourself?" And so the silly sheep is tempted away from the fold, perhaps because he may really have been abasing himself and trusting to man, instead of discerning God's presence, and humbling himself under the mighty hand of God, and so in rushing out of one error, he rushes into another and a worse one. For if we will give up the guidance of God's ministers, and choose our own guides, or guide ourselves, we have but the alternative of losing ourselves with the whole flock, or losing ourselves alone. It is thus, that the whole body of the baptized have wandered from the Lord's pasture, and that finally the flock as one body is broken up, and each individual in these wilful days shepherds himself, and wanders away from the Lord. Long has

the Lord watched us in our wanderings. Long have the holy angels wondered at His forbearance, and now they are wondering at His mercy, for He has brought back the flock to the Shepherd's care. Again the sheep have passed under the hand of Him, that telleth them, and the mark of their owner hath been inscribed on them in characters of love. Again He has set over them His under-shepherds, restoring the elders of the universal church, and the fourfold ministry, whereby He prepares and perfects His saints.

Brethren, let us adore that loving Shepherd, who has found us out, and brought us back on His shoulders with joy. Let the whole church rejoice, and each individual calling to mind the dealings of the Lord with his own soul, let us be joyful in the God of our salvation. Do we not call to mind, how often He has borne with us? how tenderly He has dealt with us? He has passed by our follies, our wilfulness, our deadness of faith, the coldness of our hearts, the unprofitableness of our lives. How often have we escaped and hidden ourselves from Him, and yet from the barren mountain He has brought us back; in the dark corner of the house He has searched for us and found us; and now He bids us to go forth and search and find our brethren, for the time is hastening, the winter is near at hand, the shadows of night are stealing over the heavens. The heart of the Lord yearns over those, who as yet refuse to hear His voice; His soul weeps for their pride. Now He bids you share with Him in this His yearning sorrow. He bids you go forth and search for His sheep scattered in

the midst of this evil world. And presently, when you shall return with His lambs in your arms, saved from the hour and power of darkness, He will prepare all heaven, and the heavenly hosts, to welcome them and you. You shall bring back them that are ready to perish, you shall present them before the throne, and there shall be joy in the presence of God and of His holy angels over the sinners that repent.

SEPARATION OF THE APOSTLES.

I Cor. iv., 1-5; Matt. xxviii., 16.

THE commission given by our Lord to His apostles before His ascension to the right hand of the Father, as we read in the Gospel for the day, was to go and make disciples among all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things He had commanded them, and this commission was based upon the assurance, that all power was given to Him in heaven and in earth, and was accompanied with the promise, Lo I am with you alway unto the end of the world, or literally, I am with you all the days until the end of the age or dispensation. Accordingly when the Holy Ghost had been shed down at Pentecost, and the devout men out of every nation under heaven, who were gathered together at Jerusalem, had come together, and had witnessed this wonderful act, Peter testified of Jesus the crucified One, that He, having been raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of the Father, had shed forth this, which ye see and hear; and he called upon those who believed, to be baptized in the name of Jesus, saying that they should receive the Holy Ghost.

In the Acts of the apostles we read, how the apostles proceeded to carry out this their commission, by baptizing those who believed, and giving to them the Holy Ghost by the laying on of their hands. And the disciples thus baptized and sealed with the Holy Ghost were prepared to be led forward into the observance of all the commandments of their Lord and Saviour. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, speaking of the office committed to him, says, " Let a man so account of us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God ;" *ministers of Christ*, through whom the anointing is given, through whom those who believe are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and are made to taste of the heavenly gift and the good word of God and the powers of the world to come ; and *stewards of the mysteries of God*, stewards of those heavenly treasures hid in Christ, which are now to be dispensed, that the church may be builded up a fit habitation of God by the Spirit ; faithful stewards responsible to the heavenly Master for the wise dispensation of the heavenly goods, the meat in due season, that nothing be wasted or lost or misapplied.

Such were the duties of the office committed to the apostles, and which were to be carried out by them and those commissioned by them, till we all come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, till the church should be seen a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish. Such is the office of the apostle in the church of Christ ; and we are called upon this day to

commemorate the separation of the apostles, whom the Lord has called and chosen in these days, and to offer to Him our eucharist in the thankful remembrance of this His great gift to the church. We are called upon to offer thanksgiving to God as recognizing in what took place as on this day in the year 1835, the great, the exceeding mercy of God towards His church in restoring what He took not away, in giving her again her judges as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning, in reviving His work and restoring to us the joy of His salvation. When the apostle Paul was going up to Jerusalem a prisoner bound in body and in spirit, he called the elders from Ephesus to him, he warned them of troubles that would arise, of grievous wolves that would come in, not sparing the flock, of men that would rise up among themselves speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them, and he commended them to God and to the word of His grace, and having prayed with them he departed, and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And the apostleship died out, and the church without apostles has indeed gone through a long captivity; she has been preyed upon by wolves; heresy and schism have done their work, perverse men have drawn away disciples after them, and the church has learned what it was to be without that ministry, to which the Lord committed the care and oversight of His inheritance. But blessed be God, we have lived to see the day when the Lord has caused our captivity to cease,

when He has again visited His church. The apostleship which the Lord restored to His church thirty-two years ago as a babe to be nourished at the breast of the mother, a babe, in whom the hope of the world and of the church rested, has grown up to full age. Since the day when the act of separation took place, a generation of men has passed away from the earth; the apostleship and the churches, that partake of their faith have grown together, they have come to spiritual manhood, to a fulness of comprehension of the ways and purpose of God, and of the mystery of the Gospel, which it is no extravagance or vain boasting to say, had never before been attained to. The apostles can say to those, who have followed them, If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you, for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. They can magnify their office because of the grace of God given to them, that they should be the ministers of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. They may magnify their office, saying, Ye are our Epistle known and read of all men, for as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, and such trust have we through Christ to God-ward, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter but of the Spirit. They may magnify their office, for the Lord doeth nothing in vain. He has

given again apostles, and He, who is Himself the great Apostle, works by them ; though I preach the Gospel, said Paul, I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel ! But it is not on our own account merely, that we ought to rejoice and praise God for His unspeakable gift. The work of God in restoring apostles is not a work limited to ourselves who believe ; it is a work for the healing of the whole church, for her deliverance. It is a token to all for good, it is as the Star in the East, which shall yet guide many on their way to worship the King of kings. Now, beloved, let us with overflowing hearts give God thanks this day for the revival of His work, for the hope which has been quickened in us of His speedy coming, and for the means He has afforded us, whereby we may be prepared to meet Him as a holy first-fruits without guile before the throne of God. Let us give God thanks for that spiritual fellowship, which we have not with twelve men after the flesh, but with the apostles of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; with those, who are not of man nor by man, but of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, with those who, as the sent ones of Him the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, can say, be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ, with those who can say, that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The restoration of apostles is a pledge of our fellowship with Paul and with John, with Peter and James, with all the glorious com-

pany, whose names are embalmed in holy writ, the savour of whose works has come down to us, who though dead yet speak and call upon us to endure unto the end, that with them we may receive our reward. It is an assurance to us of the truth of those words, Lo I am with you alway unto the end of the age. It is an assurance to us, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church. It is an assurance of the final triumph of the church over all her enemies, of her dignity as the bride of the Lamb to judge the world and angels, and to reign with the Lord as kings and priests to God and the Father for ever. And if we will yield ourselves to Him, to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth, and obey the teaching of His Spirit, it is a pledge to us, that the time of deliverance is at hand, both for the living and for those who have died in the faith, God having reserved this better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Rom. viii., 18-23 ; Luke vi., 36-42.

“WE are saved by hope.” Hope is the earnest expectation for some desired good. It is that which of all the elements and instincts of our being, tends most to our comfort, our exertion, our endurance. To be without hope is a state of mind at once unprofitable, weakening, and injurious. Christianity, the religion of Jesus Christ, does not bring any new element into our constitution, either of mind or body ; it gives a right direction to that which is. It furnishes the right object, and gives the true motives, which should influence, control, or stimulate our desires, our affections, our thoughts, our conduct. Man is by his very natural constitution a being of hope, and just in proportion as this element is, or is not predominant in his being, he is, or is not (even in regard to worldly things) calculated to be a useful member of the human family, the guardian of his own peace, and the stimulator in others of energetic purposes. God has created hope in man’s heart. God, in Jesus Christ, brings to us the true object, on which to exercise it, and at the same time gives us grace to do so. On this let us meditate for a few moments. We are

called to hope, and to hope to the *end*; and for *what*? “For the grace that is to be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” See how this is developed in the portion of scripture read for the Epistle. “Now the creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body;” this also is styled “a manifestation of the sons of God.” The Lord Jesus is gone up to heaven to prepare a place for us in the house of His Father, where there are many mansions. He will come again; when He comes, He will restore all things. Until He comes all things are in disorder, weakness, imperfection; and it *must* be so. The Head of the house is absent, the Lord of the soil is absent, the Husband of the wife is absent, the Father of the children is absent. *Now*, preparation only is being made, and only can be made for His in-coming. *Now* the members of His body are being formed. *Now* the army of the hosts of the Lord is being enlisted. The laws and ordinances of His kingdom, the rules of His government are being made; the wheat to be gathered into barns, is now growing and ripening; the life, the life of Christ, in His body is now hidden; the food can only be received in mystic and in sacramental form. *Now* all is by *faith*. We see not Jesus, we hear Him not, we handle Him not, we see not His body, we see not His throne. Where is His court? Where are His subjects? Where His kingdom? Every knee does not bow to Him, every tongue does not call Him Lord; all things are not yet put under Him; He has not yet seen of the travail of His soul, and been satis-

fied. Oh no! it is far otherwise; all is in abeyance; creation itself groans and travails in pain. Sorrow and sin, and corruption, and death, are rife on the earth. It is still the night; a long and dreary night still broods upon the face of God's creation, and even the church of God, the ark of refuge, has still to ride out the troubled sea, and finds not her rest. What then can buoy her up? What can make her endure, and has made her endure in ages past (unknown it may be to herself)? One thing, and one alone—the *hope* of the end. This is an anchor sure and steadfast, that entereth within the veil, and enables her to ride out the storm; this is the helmet of salvation, which throws off the thrusts of the enemy of her peace; this is the hope that maketh not ashamed; this is the hope that gives her “songs in the night.” And what is this hope? It is that Jesus will come, and with Him the restoration of all things spoken of by all the prophets; it is that *He* will come, and take His kingdom and reign, whose right it is, and then the order of God will be established. His ways shall be known upon earth, His saving health unto all nations. Then creation itself shall be delivered; then the sons of God shall be manifested; then the saints, who have fallen asleep, shall arise from their long sleep, and Jesus Himself shall come as He went up to heaven, and then His saints shall be caught up to meet Him.

Who shall describe the blessedness of that day, when the morning of the resurrection shall break away from the long dull night, that has covered the creation of God, when the rest of God shall come in, and death shall be

swallowed up in victory; and this is our hope, for which we patiently wait. Hope is more than patience; it is founded on, and it strengthens patience. Hope realizes; it makes that, which is believed and waited for, a *reality*. There is such a thing as the patience of hope. We know, that of this hope we shall not be disappointed, it will assuredly come to pass. Jesus Himself waiteth its accomplishment, creation groaneth and travaileth for it, the church prayeth for it—"the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." And it will come. What are His doings on this day, but to tell us to be ready, to expect Him, for that He is near, and His reward is with Him. If this is not our hope, we are of all men most miserable. We have been *spoiled* for the world, and "the fashion of it passeth away." We cannot drink at the streams, at which others find refreshment and strength. God be praised that they do; but our hope is Jesus—to see Him, to be like Him, to be with Him, to be gathered unto Him; to see the dark heavens (and dark they are) streaked with the rising of the sun. This is our hope, for ourselves, for them that sleep, for creation. The dead in Christ will sleep on in rest until He comes, but God will bring them with Him; we who are alive at the moment of His coming shall be caught up to meet Him, and then Christ's day begins, and the darkness of night is thrown back, and God shall have His way, and His kingdom shall have no end. Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees. Hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus

Christ. To your faith add patience, to your patience, hope. And now when He gathereth us to His very table, to His immediate presence, to feed on the bread of heaven, to drink the wine of the kingdom, be filled with the joy of this hope. Let nothing rob you of it. If you would be purified, hope to see, to be with, to be like Jesus. If you would endure, hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ. We are saved by hope.

Rom. viii., 18-23; Luke vi., 36-42.

THE Holy Scripture selected for the Epistle of this day is part of a part of the word of God, which has perhaps above many others strengthened and comforted the members of Christ's body in all times. It is true there is always a danger in choosing parts of the word of God, suited as it were to our taste, and ignoring others—cherishing promises and forgetting warnings—against which all have to watch, and one safeguard against this danger is the following daily the portions of Scripture, which the Church has appointed, by which means all its parts are brought to our minds, and so a corrective is found against *choice*. This advantage we have in the church, having chosen Epistles and Gospels for the Sundays throughout the year, as subjects for meditation in immediate connection with the offering of the holy eucharist. Let us then see what the scriptures of this

day contain. The immediate context begins with contrasting *present suffering* with *future glory*. In the immediate context—the *joint heir-ship* of the children of Christ with Christ in glory is made dependent on their *joint suffering* with Him *now*. This is worthy of our serious consideration—of being laid to heart. It assumes the certainty, that the present condition of the church collectively and individually is a *suffering* condition—that as Christ Himself came into a body of humiliation, which was to have no standing in the world as it now is, but to endure disfavour, persecution, trial and crucifixion—so must those, who are one with Him now by a living faith, lay their account to be despised, persecuted, hated of men, cast out, looked upon as deceivers, to be falsely accused, and, it may be, called upon to lay down their lives for their faith. Brethren, are we prepared to take their position? have we counted the cost in casting our lot with that portion of the church, which is most likely to come under the reproach of Christ? Yea, which has come under that reproach.

The contempt of the world is our portion—and if to avoid that, we do at any time, when duty calls, hide our faith—we in so far, refuse to be fellow-sufferers with Christ *now*. But we come to the portion of this day. The apostle was inspired to write thus—“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” The apostle Paul had by experience above others the means whereby to reckon. No one had more buffettings to endure as the consequence of his faithfulness; he only,

so far as we know, was caught up to the third heaven, and made to witness unspeakable things ; he had a taste of the glory, and that taste, put into the scale of his reckoning, outweighed incomparably all the sufferings he had endured, or could have to endure in his mortal body. Let us take the result of his reckoning to ourselves, and believe, if faithful to the end, that we as joint-heirs with Christ shall be the first to partake of the glory which is "to be revealed in us," for the apostle speaks of our being heirs with Christ.

But it does not end there. Creation waits for the church's blessing, that it may partake of the glory also. In the exercise of Divine wisdom, man was set at the head of creation, the highest of God's creatures, made after the image of God, endowed with faculties which qualified him for communion with God, with an understanding of His revealed will, with a capacity to love, and fear, and obey Him. Man was the most honoured of creation, but, alas, he fell from his high standing, and with his fall drew down into suffering and groaning all that was placed under him.

And now that the God of creation—the God of mercy has found a way of recovering *man* from his lost estate and opened to him through the redemption by Christ the way to eternal glory, the subordinate creation, which he drew down, waits for its deliverance also, waits for the accomplishment of the full work of redemption—the restitution of all things. What a wonderful purpose of God in showing forth the glory of creation as it came forth from His hand, when He pronounced it good, is yet

to be accomplished! what a comforting thought to indulge that our groaning and the groaning of all creation shall come to an end, and shall partake of a blessedness of which we cannot now form a conception! what a spur to our sluggish faith and hope! what a motive to press forward in the way of glory, is the thought, that with man's deliverance comes creation's deliverance also, and the full manifestation of God's glory in righteous judgment and infinite mercy. Such are the thoughts, which this portion of Holy Scripture presents to the mind, unfathomable though they be, they are elevating, comforting, and full of hope. But ah, remember that the way is through suffering, not self-inflicted, but as the fruits of faithfulness. The exhortations of the Gospel follow close upon this—"Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful." Lighten the burden of suffering creation, of which you have been the cause, as much as you can—in your fellow men, and in all creatures. Judge not and condemn not, as you hope not to be judged nor condemned. Forgive, as you hope to be forgiven. Give abundantly, as you hope for abundant blessing. Live not for yourselves, but for others, yielding yourselves into the hands of your loving Lord, to be the channels of His love to all.

May the Lord give us hearts, give us grace to fulfil His will in all things, that so we may live to His glory, and partake of His glory through ages yet to come.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

I Peter iii., 8-16; Luke v., 1-11.

THE chief difficulty the Lord has in these days with us, is to lift men out of their individual selfishness, even when directed on the good object of their own salvation, into the reality of their being members of a corporate body, in the unity of which we live, and move, and have our being, and into the condition of seeking the welfare of that body above all other considerations, so that it may be a true word in our lips, when we say, "Let our tongues cleave to the roofs of our mouths, and our right hands forget their cunning, if we prefer not Jerusalem above our chief joy" (Ps. cxxxvii.).

It is true that a man never ceases to be a responsible individual, and God speaks to each one of us as individuals in regard to all our dealings with Him and each other. But there is a larger, wider scope of existence and of thought into which, if we would understand scripture and enter into what God wants with us, we must be brought into the apprehension of, namely, that we are one with a body, members of a body, caring for that body more than for ourselves, thinking of it, sacrificing ourselves for it, merging our own interests in its

interests. For instance, when we join in the liturgy of the church, whom are we thinking of—ourselves, or the church? when we say in the litany, “Good Lord deliver us.” What do we mean by the word *us*? We generally mean not *us*, but *me*. Now, no doubt, the individual unit of the body, the *me*, is included in the “*us*”; but *us* is not *me*, but “*us*,” the body of Christ, the church. Let us once understand this, and what a different feeling will come over us in regard to the whole services of the church, when we confess the sins of *us*, and pray for *us*, and not for *me*.

Let us apply this principle to the Epistle. “Finally, be all of one mind, &c., love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.” No doubt it applies to all our conduct, mutually to one another. Would that all were pitiful and courteous to one another, husband and wife, master and servant, and in all the relationships of life. But it is not of that I would speak to-day, but of the conduct of the ministers of God in dealing with all the schisms and sects of Christendom, and the people connected with them. We think of this especially to-day, when we remember that the last homily, the fourth called of the apostles ever preached in this church was upon this Epistle, himself the chief pattern and example of the truth he preached, and who ever was the courteous peace-maker.

There are wondrous mysteries, symbolized in the colours and properties of the foundation-stones of the city of God; they indicate the spiritual and moral qualities that form the foundation of the Christian

church. And we may be sure of this, that the being pitiful, courteous, &c., is the fruit of preserving the foundations and building thereupon. Other foundation can no man lay than Christ Jesus, for in Him, and Him alone, are all the spiritual and moral qualities combined and perfect, and from Him the grace and power of them come into the church ; but then He ministers them to the church by the hands of His apostles, the foundations of the spiritual city. And all these qualities are distributed to them, that they may distribute them to the church.

1st. Constancy and endurance in all truth, every form and colour of it. 2nd. The spiritual mind, in the sense of apprehending spiritual things, discerning the working of the Holy Spirit, and discerning the spirits of men, and the capacity of ruling spiritual men in the Spirit, the calm and deep quiet blue of the heavens. 3rd. The patient and quiet spirit, the calm patience of the heavenly Pastor, proceeding from a calm and quiet heart. 4th. The peacemaker, the emerald green, the holder of the olive branch of peace, the healer of quarrels, the uniter of the brethren. 5th. The capability of seeing and declaring both sides of all questions that divide the church for want of it. 6th. The love that comes through the blood of the Lamb, the sorrows of Christ over sin and sinners, and yet the love that permits no sin. 7th. The perception of love of truth, and of *the* truth, and the precise declarer of it, not wandering into the regions of the imagination at all. 8th. The understanding of the things to come, and the prophecies of the kingdom and of the deep things of God concerning it, and His

providence connected with it. 9th. The word that is like a fire, consuming all unrighteousness, and yet so loving and so kind, so deep, so bright, so high. 10th. The knowledge of the first principles of the Gospel of Christ and of the Gospel of the kingdom, and the kindness that forgives all sin and all offences, and declares and ministers forgiveness and help of every kind ; the minister of the word that Paul ministered, that milk of the word of peace which the children need. 11th. The depth of wisdom and of knowledge to those who can bear more than milk, and yet the patient, gentle, kind, and quiet utterance of them unmoved by the folly of those, who will not receive them, sorrowing, but never angry. And, finally, the rule over one's own spirit, which, though conscious of the possession of all these wondrous gifts from God, enables men to use them in the fear of God, and for the glory of God, and to win all things under His rule and into His kingdom—the purple of the amethyst, the complement of the foundations.

If we examine all these in their particularity, and in their combined aggregate, we shall see how they are the character of that Pastoral Man, the Ruler over all—emanating from whom, and round whose head, is the emerald rainbow, the sign of the covenant of peace—His character carried out in the foundations. And such should be the Christian church ; these qualities being ministered to them from the apostles, the foundations of the city of God. If these things be not ministered, if the foundations fail, what must be the result ? Schisms,

quarrellings, contentions, strifes, railings, and such like—and such is the state of all Christendom. As I said, I speak not of individuals, though I might well do so, for the growing lack of courtesy in the young manifests how little the kingdom of God is within them, and how little they are building on the foundations. But I speak of all Christendom, and the aspect its sects bear of contention, railing, and strife.

Now you are called to be the witness against this state of things, you who believe the foundations are manifested and are ministering these things unto you. Let the kingdom of God be in you. Let it be seen that it is in you; that it works from you. Be indeed that Philadelphian band that loveth all, that is pitiful, kind, patient, courteous, and yet giving a reason for the hope that is in you.

The same things are also symbolized in the Gospel of the day. The net, whereby the ministers of Christ catch men, contains the mystery of the same qualities; the fringe of the garments of the priests, which was like fine lace work; the grate of the brazen altar, which sustained the sacrifice in the course of its consuming; the net of Peter; what are these but the pity, the patience, the kindness, the long-suffering, the gentleness, the love and graces of the Spirit of Christ, whereby men are caught, and not only caught, but kept after they are caught.

Seek, then, to possess them, to be filled with them, and "I will make you fishers of men," saith the Lord. And we come to the altar and table of the Lord this day, that we may partake of Him in whom all these glorious

qualities are, that they may come from Him into us, that we may manifest them to others, that we may be fishers of men, and the healers of the breaches of Christendom.

I Peter iii., 8-16; Luke v., 1-11.

THE Epistle of this day has a practical bearing on the walk and conversation of the followers of Christ, as towards each other, and as to its effect on those, who are not of one faith with ourselves. As to each other, we are called to be of *one mind*; the diversity of mind, which I apprehend must apply mainly to doctrine, found in the visible church of Christ Jesus among the baptized, is no doubt a great grief to our blessed Lord, and a great hindrance to that testimony, which the church at large should bear to the unbelieving, whether in Christian or in heathen lands. “If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare for the battle?” and when those bearing the name of Christ present a diversity of mind and doctrine, how shall those, who give an ear to them, know whom to follow, and where to rest? It is to provide a remedy for this evil state of things that the Lord has, in our day, moved in His church; restoring the primitive ordinance of apostles, that united and sound doctrine might go forth in His church, and reach unto the minds of men. If this be so, how much it behoves us all to forego our own private opinions, and to speak those things, which come

forth from apostles as the one ordinance for unity of doctrine in the church. "Be ye all of one mind." But unity of truth will not avail, unless there be one heart and spirit pervading the church. "Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." This regards the mutual bearing of the members one towards another; if the love of Christ to them does not constrain them to love one another as members of His body, they have not that abiding testimony within them of their vital union to Him, which should bring peace and joy. The Holy Ghost in them is grieved and straitened, and unable to do His full work in and by them. This love should be so living a principle and passion in them, as to produce not courtesy only—the fringe on the garment—but should control and prevent all painful antagonism, all evil and hard thoughts one of another, and should so operate that blessing in word and deed, should run current in the body, and be felt in all their mutual contact and converse. Oh! how the Lord longeth to bless! to bless His children, to make them each the channel of blessing, one to the other. Christians should never meet and part without a mutual consciousness of having given and received a blessing; and *that* from the Lord, who dwelleth in each. What should the church be? Walking in this spirit; sanctifying the Lord God in our hearts, we need fear nothing, but go on our way rejoicing.

So much as concerning the church in herself. And what as to the effect on those outside? Mankind at large are more influenced by what they *see*,

than by what they *hear*. They should hear from you unity of truth, the “one mind,” the mind of Christ; but they should more especially *see* its effect, its working in those who speak it. Men should be constrained to say, “See how these Christians love one another.” If the church be full of love in herself, she will love all men; for this is God’s love, and in proof thereof Jesus has given His life for all. But it must be a practical love working within and without, a full measure within, and then flowing over. Not that this will exempt you from persecution and evil speaking; that has ever been the lot of the true followers of Christ, because the devil is ever stirring men to fight against Christ in His body; and while you should hate the devil in all his devices, you should love men, though they be your persecutors; and beware that you give the enemy no advantage by any unrighteousness. Walk uprightly and fear no adversary, for the Lord is on your side; keep before you the example of Christ. “He hath suffered, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.” All His suffering and labour is to this end, “that He might bring us to God.” Yield your spirit, soul, and body to be so brought. Now He standeth at His altar and says to you, “Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Come and feed upon My body and blood, which is your life. Take it at My hand, as I gave it to your fathers, and take it as an earnest, that you shall eat and drink with Me in My kingdom. Peace be with you.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Rom. vi., 3-11; Matt. v., 20-26.

AN evil and corrupt doctrine and leaven of unrighteousness, which works in the heart of the Christian people considered as a corporate whole, and in the heart of every individual Christian, pleads for imperfect holiness as the necessary condition of baptized and regenerated man on this side of the resurrection. The false doctrine effectually produces the condition for which it pleads, in all those who listen to the plea. This is an inadequate doctrine—a doctrine leavened with unbelief—a gospel mutilated and deprived of its just proportions, a gospel which pretends to proclaim forgiveness of sins through the death of Christ, and the promise of the Holy Spirit's help, in order to enable corrupt and sinful man to overcome the force of evil habit, and the power of temptation. But how can we, who are corrupt and sinful, overcome evil habit, and resist temptation? If Eve, in the young life of new created innocence, hearkened to the serpent, and was deceived—if Adam, without being deceived, gave up his innocence, and casting in his lot with the woman, took the fruit from her hand, and plunged into the transgression, how are

we to withstand? The mere fact that the penalty of our sin is remitted, the mere fact that the Holy Spirit whispers to us how good is holiness—how preferable is righteousness—what peace of conscience have they, whose heart is set to serve God—nay, even the continual persuasions of the Holy Spirit to give ourselves up to God, and to choose Him for our chief good, all these *may* fail—do fail—we are conscious that they fail to keep us stedfast, and to enable us to hold the ground, to which our gracious God would restore our footsteps. I say we are conscious in ourselves, that the evil heart and corrupt and biassed will is still alive, and God's grace does but the more plainly reveal to us, that we do the things that we would not, and that when we would do good, evil is present with us. O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this body of sin and death?

Brethren, the full and complete Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is not that which man has perverted, sophisticated, and diluted, but that which Christ has given to His apostles to declare to the fallen children of men. This Gospel is the true and only deliverance from our body of sin and death, in which we groan. It proclaims, indeed, the infinite mercy and love of our God, who, when we were yet sinners, gave His Son to die for us—offering up on our behalf a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement and satisfaction for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. So that, for Christ's sake, our God and Father remits the just judgment and penalty, which our sins deserved. But it proclaims much more—it proclaims pardon and absolution to us, not in our

separateness, but in our being united unto Him in His dear Son. He regards not us—but His dear Son. He not only remits our debt, because it has been paid on our behalf. This He does—but, also, He sends forth the Spirit of His Son upon us—He engrafts us and makes us very members of the mystical body of His Son. He so unites us to Christ that we pass from death to life, the death of His Son upon the cross is reproduced in us. The new life by which, through the operation of the Holy Ghost in the spirit re-united to the body, that natural body was quickened in the grave, is reproduced in our spirits. His new birth from the grave, the birth of the First-begotten of all creation, of the First-begotten from among the dead, is reproduced in us. The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Him that is risen, assimilates us to the nature regenerated from death, immortal, spiritual, divine, so that we are capable of receiving and being nourished by His flesh and blood, and He can dwell in us, and we can dwell in Him. And, brethren, if these things be not true, God's sacraments ordained in His church are false signs of unreal things; and if they be true, how can we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?

Such is the argument of the apostle in the Epistle for the day, such is the word of the Lord conveyed to us in His Gospel, that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, or else we *cannot* enter into the kingdom of heaven. Yes, we are our Lord's—that He may do with us whatsoever He wills, and His will is that we be *holy* in all manner of

conversation and godliness, that we bring forth His holiness out from His own holy heart in all our thoughts, and words, and works.

Remember the word, which was spoken to us last Lord's day in the Holy Ghost, "when the Lord shall see His name upon your foreheads, then shall ye know the power of His name." Let us *make* the sacraments of the church to be realities. How shall we, that are dead and buried with Christ in baptism, live any longer to the lusts of the flesh ! How shall we, that are risen through baptism, bring forth the fruits of sin and death ! How shall we, who live by the holy flesh and blood of Jesus, be other than He is ! How can we, who are sealed with the holy Spirit of promise and have the Father's name impressed upon our foreheads, allow any other mark to be stamped upon our lives ! We are Christ's—alive unto God through Christ, and therefore we wait for Christ, that He may keep us blameless, and present us spotless before the throne of His Father and our Father, with exceeding joy. Yes. For this we wait.

Rom. vi., 3-II; Matt. 5., 20.

THE Jews could not comprehend the teaching of the Lord. His teaching (if not opposed to) was at least totally different from that which they had learnt ; it was of another kind. He spoke of "the kingdom of the heavens," and of the righteousness belonging to it, of

which they formed the most incorrect notions. They thought of an earthly kingdom. It was even so with His disciples. Therefore what He said was ever met by words like these—"who then can be saved?" "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" "How can these things be?" He was like a man setting forth strange things. He came not to destroy the law, and yet His teaching, to those who had not the *key* to its interpretation, seemed like the upsetting of it; a new doctrine; a strange theory.

After the day of Pentecost, apostles and others say what He said, and go much further. That, to which He seems only to allude, they reiterate, enlarge upon, enforce. See this exemplified in the Epistle and Gospel of the day. The subject is *righteousness*. Our Lord said that to enter into the "*kingdom of the heavens*," they must have made more progress, must abound more in righteousness than the scribes and pharisees, and specifies some particulars in proof of this. It was a new and a strange thing to be told, that he that was angry with his brother should be in danger of the judgment, that he that should say thou fool, should be in danger of hell fire. These were new and strange lessons, and the more so, as doubtless containing spiritual lessons and spiritual references. But what is this, when compared with, or read in the light of that which is taught in the Epistle? "As many of us as have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into His death." "We are buried with Him (have been buried with him) by baptism into His death." "*Baptized into Christ.*"

Oh brethren, do *we* enter into the meaning—the reality of these words? And that, as a thing which has taken place in ourselves?

By the act of God, by God's own appointment, by God's own command, by God's own institution we have been baptized *into* Christ. These are not conventional, figurative, theological expressions. They do not mean, that we have been made members of a religious community, or professors of Christianity, or brought into outward covenant with God (as were the Jews), or the subjects of gracious dealings on the part of God. All these are true, but as short of the mark as though, were you describing what man is, you were to say, “he is a creature that has the form, instincts, and characteristics that belong to an animal,” and forgot to say, “*He has a soul.*”

Just so all these fail to say, what it *is* to be “*baptized into Christ*,” and yet that which it *is*, has passed on you, and on me; *we* have been “*baptized into Christ*.” And therefore we can, we should have the righteousness that belongs to, and that enters into “the kingdom of the heavens.” “Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” This was Christ's command, this has taken place on us, and we thereby have been baptized into Christ. Now, that baptism has made such a union between Christ and us, that we are *one* with Him. We die with Him, we are baptized into *His death*, because we are baptized *into Him*. How so? In baptism we have received by the Holy Ghost a new life, a spiritual life which we had not,

which we could not have before, which is not handed down from parent to child, which Adam had not, which angels have not, *life from, the life* of the Son of God *become man*. This was given to us, this was implanted in us by the act of God in our baptism, for this baptism was ordained by Christ; *therefore we die*, we give up our natural life, the life, the very being of our hearts, the propensities, the desires of our minds, the very throb of our being, we renounce as polluted, as corrupt at the very fountain. We say "in us dwelleth no good thing," we say "we are born in sin," we are sinful, guilty, and corrupt, we give ourselves up as being so utterly wicked, debased, polluted, that nothing but the death of the Son of God in our nature could save us! And we abhor, detest, and renounce as polluted, as vile and guilty, that nature, the sin, the guilt of which caused the Son of God to die, in order that from its deserved reward we might be freed.

Oh, the horror, the malignity, the blackness of that pollution, which brought death unto the Son of God, from which to save us, He died. By the Spirit of God given us in our baptism we enter into His *death*, we are baptized *into His death*. In Him we die, because we receive that new life, which *gives up to death*, which renounces the corrupt and guilty life derived from Adam. We die that we may live, that we may "walk in newness of life," in the life, the new life, the life of Him, raised by the glory of the Father. "We are dead," we reckon ourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God. Oh, brethren, let this be your ever present thought, we

are baptized *into*, incorporated into Christ. In His death we die, in His life we live, we are *one* with Him, He is one with us. In you, the members of His body, He would show forth His death, death to sin, and His life, life unto God. Live then unto God as those that are alive from the dead. Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ, *hid* with Christ *in* God. Live the life, you live in the flesh, by the faith of the Son of God, that is, let Christ live in you. Yield yourselves to Him as His members. Let your only care, your only concern be to *yield, yield, yield* yourselves to Him. The source, the fountain head of your life, is in Christ. Let the life-blood circulate in His body. Yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead. And now eat at His table, partake at His altar, that you may be strengthened unto His kingdom.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Rom. vi., 19; Mark viii., 1-9.

THERE are two kinds of liberty spoken of in the Epistle, " freedom from righteousness " and " freedom from sin." The nations of the earth are labouring for the first, the body of Christ cannot rest till the second be attained. The nations of the earth are seeking for a freedom of thought, of speech and of action, which no law or ordinance or habit or spirit of righteousness shall interfere with, or restrain. Righteousness stands in the way of their liberty, it meets them with a revelation from God, with institutions of God, with a public opinion, which has yet in it something of the fear of God ; they are weary of these obstructions, they cry out, " Let us break these bands asunder ; let us cast away these cords from us." " All that is called God and that is worshipped " presses upon us like a nightmare, it stops our progress, it bars our way to perfection, it snatches from us all our enjoyments, it hinders our developing what is in us, and delighting ourselves with what is around us ; let us set ourselves against the enemy of our liberty and of our peace ; let us not rest till we escape from our bondage. Men have an instinct that

a mystery of lawlessness is before them as their ultimate realization, and they labour for its accomplishment. They are running to a goal, they are winning a prize. The goal is escape from God, the prize is "freedom from righteousness." How dreadful will be that society, where no right feeling shall prevail,—where no right thought shall be entertained,—where no right word shall be spoken,—where no right work shall be done,—where no right motive shall influence,—no right end shall attract. That is human society perfecting itself and refusing the salvation of God.

Christ's liberty is *freedom* from sin, and *service* of God. He is able to make us free from sin,—He can strengthen us to serve God. This liberty the church in the last days is made to desire—is enabled to attain. Christ would not say to us, "Yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness," if He could not effect what He commands. In the last days He will put consecration to God as a mark upon an election, which trusts in Him,—which follows Him whithersoever He leadeth. Consecration to a beast,—to a lawless one,—to a wilful king, will be the mark of the reprobate in the last days,—of those in whom iniquity is come to the full,—of those in whom the mystery of lawlessness shall be consummated.

Christ shall put His mark, even "holiness unto the Lord," upon those who receive His seal. Oh, that our hearts were enlarged, that we might be willing to receive all that our Lord and Saviour is willing to give! The disciples in the wilderness were able to trust Him, and

they brought unto Him their "seven loaves" and their "few small fishes," with which He fed to the full the multitude that followed Him. To make us holy is no less a miracle, than to satisfy that multitude with bread in the wilderness. The church puts the demand for holiness and the miraculous feeding together, that we might be filled with confidence. The Lord feeds *us* more miraculously than He did the multitude that day. He gives us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. In His flesh there is no sin, in His blood there is no weakness. Freedom and servitude met in Christ. He was free from sin; but He was the servant of God. Shall not we, who eat and drink at the altar of God the flesh and blood of the righteous and holy One, be witnesses for the *liberty* and *servitude*, which He introduced into the world? The church should be seen serving God. What hinders? Sin—consciousness of sin—habits of sin—love of sin. We must be made free from the oppression, which conscious sin produces—from the enfeebling habits, which sin indulged has formed—from the love of sin, which makes human life a service of "divers lusts and pleasures,"—before we can wait upon God with diligence, to receive His commands that we may obey them. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—to "save them from their sins." God accepts the service of those, who are forsaking all sin. True liberty, must precede true service. Let us stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ has made us free, that so we may be continually presented

unto God as those redeemed unto Him—as those whom He can use as His kings and priests to subdue all things under Him—to offer all things unto Him—as those who are trained by serving Him, to rule over and guide all the works of His hands. Let not the three degrees of evil be seen in God's church :—uncleanness, unrighteousness, death. Uncleanness, which weakens body and soul, rendering the man unable to look upon the righteous demands, which heaven above and earth beneath make upon him. Unrighteousness, or disobedience, which was accursed of God when it appeared in His universe, and must remain under His curse for ever. Death, which means deprivation of all good, and infliction of all misery. But let Christ's deliverance be experienced. Let Him make us righteous ; let Him consecrate the righteous unto the service of God, and let the end of that service appear, even life everlasting, even new life, which shall never end, to all creation, redeemed by Christ, and in Him saved.

Rom. vi., 19 ; Mark viii., 1-9.

GOD has taken us into union with Himself, bringing us to the holy font in penitence and faith in His forgiving mercy, through the death and sacrifice of His dear Son incarnate. He has sent down on us the Holy Ghost, baptizing us into Christ, making us very members incorporate of His mystical body, and regenerating us

with His new, and spiritual, and heavenly life—so that we are one in spiritual life and being with Him who hath died, and is raised, and dies no more, but lives for ever unto God. As He is, so are we. We have died to the flesh—we are raised from death—we live unto God. This is what we reckon ourselves to be, if we be true Christians. Truly and fully to believe the Gospel, and thus to reckon concerning ourselves, are one and the same thing. And he that thus fully and truly believes—he that thus reckons concerning his death and his life, cannot live any longer in sin, it is an absolute contradiction in the very nature of things.

Oh, when will Christian men see with the spiritual eye—exercise the heavenly powers of vision, with which they are endowed? When will they see things as they really are, and abide in the consciousness of what they are in Christ? When will they know, that not by constraint, or of an enforced necessity, but by the higher law of the spiritual being, into which they have been born again in Christ, they are not their own, but Christ's? They are in this mortal flesh, but the flesh is dead through the crucifixion of Christ, and the spirit lives through His resurrection. They are in this mortal body, but the body is dead because of sin, and the spirit lives because of righteousness. Christ, our righteousness, lives by the Holy Ghost, and presents His members to God continually in righteousness and true holiness.

Must the Lord ever speak unto His servants still after the manner of men, because they will still abide in this infirm flesh, and exchange the consciousness of the

spirit for the consciousness of frail and feeble nature—thus through the failure of faith permitting the flesh to revive? Must He again and again renew His instruction to them in the first principles of the oracles of God, and feed them with milk, because they are babes, unskilful in the word of righteousness, unhabituated in the exercise of the spiritual faculties bestowed on them for the discernment of good and evil? In His great forbearance, however, He speaks to His disciples after the manner of men, that they may rise up into the spiritual knowledge, and attain to the understanding of the heavenly mysteries. He reminds us that to whomsoever we yield ourselves to be bond-slaves, his slaves we are, until we subjected ourselves to the tyranny of Satan and of sin. God created us free from sin and servants of ~~are~~ are delivered from his bond-service. But we have all righteousness—we traitorously betrayed our Lord, renounced righteousness, and yielded our members servants to lawlessness and sin. This nature, thus surrendered to the enemy of our Lord, He Himself hath taken. He hath sanctified it by the Holy Ghost, and presenteth the members of this, our human body, instruments of righteousness unto God. Moreover, He hath not only by His death atoned for sin, and expiated the past, but through death and resurrection He hath brought our nature regenerated and quickened anew by the Holy Ghost into eternal subjection unto God.

Choose therefore the master, whom ye will serve—only remember, ye cannot serve both. In Adam you were born subject to sin, and the end everlasting death—not

extinction, not separation of the living soul from the dead body—but the eternal union of soul and body in a living, conscious, agonizing death. Baptized into Christ, you are born again, the servant of righteousness, and the end everlasting life—body, soul, and spirit, united in the Holy Ghost, abiding in Christ, and Christ in us, for ever. Choose—or rather, accept the gift of God, for it is He, who gives unto you His Son, and gives you unto His Son. It is His gift—for Christ hath overcome the tyranny of sin and delivered us, who before were subject to its bondage. He hath died unto sin once; He lives henceforth for ever unto God. And those, that are baptized into Him, have died with Him, and are with Him raised to the life of righteousness.

Thus always, in speaking to us and dealing with us after the manner of men, would He lead us onward to our heavenly privileges. He it is, that provideth food for all flesh, and when the visible means fail, can draw forth sufficiency out of His inexhaustible bounty. And when He would impart His own substance to us to be the food of our eternal life, He does it still through these earthly and inadequate elements, appealing in the same act both to our bodily senses and to our faith. The multitude beheld the Man distributing the scanty loaves and few fishes, and found that from His hands they were sufficient. They marvelled, because their eyes were holden, and they could not discern God their Creator. Our eyes behold this table of stone, these crumbs of bread, this little portion of wine,—oh let us not follow the

example of unbelief, but be strong in faith, and give glory to God. Then shall we behold Him that is invisible, Him that is at the right hand of the Father, present by the Holy Ghost in the midst of us, stretching forth His right hand toward us, and saying to each one, "Take, eat, this is My body; drink ye of this, for this is My blood; receive Me, even Myself; eat, drink, and live for ever."

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Rom. viii., 12-17; Matt. vii., 15-21.

IN all the feasts of the Lord in the Old Testament, which are typical of all that we believe and do in the church, there was one thing especially forbidden, namely, that the children of Israel should do any *servile* work, while keeping them. The antitypes of all these feasts, the Sabbath, the Passover, the Pentecost, the feast of Trumpets, the day of Atonement, the feast of Tabernacles, are all kept by us in the Christian church continually. We keep the Sabbath, for we rest in God and in His love and faithfulness, and cease from our own works. We keep the Passover, for we abide in the church, that house on the door-posts and lintels of which the blood of the Holy Lamb is sprinkled. We keep the Pentecost, for we have received the Holy Ghost and walk in the Spirit. We keep the feast of Trumpets, for we are ever by faith hearing that trumpet, that will summon us to the in-gathering of the Lord, and are momentarily waiting to hear it in reality. We keep the day of Atonement, for we believe that our High Priest has carried within the vail the blood of the sacrifice, which purifies the holy places from the sins of His people,

and are waiting in prayer for Him to come out to bless us. We keep the feast of Tabernacles, for we believe, that the day is coming when the tabernacle of God will be with men, and we are rejoicing in the hope of that day.

Yes, the church keeps the feasts, all the feasts of the Lord. Therefore, if we keep these feasts, as we do every day and always, we must do no *servile* work. It is against the law to do any *servile* work. What does this signify? The answer is in the Epistle. "As many as are led by the spirit of God, are the *sons* of God," not the *slaves*. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage (slavery) again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, crying *Abba, Father.*" You serve as *sons*, not as *slaves*. It is not unwilling bondage, you, indeed, obeying God, because you dare not do otherwise, but wishing that you might do otherwise; nay, such is not our service. We are of one mind with Him, we have the mind of Christ; we are of one spirit with Him, we have the spirit of Christ; are we not one with Him and He with us? He keepeth His covenant with us, not the covenant of the law, which is bondage, but the new covenant. He puts His laws into our minds, and writes them in our *hearts*. It is our joy to do His will. "Ye that love the Lord hate evil." You do hate it; we gladly, freely, willingly serve Him as *sons*; and the pleasure of our God is to see us serving Him as *children*, with the love of children, the simplicity of children, the confidence of children. No *servile* work. This is the thing God wants.

Men are always trying to frighten people into serving

God, endeavouring to force them by fear. And so our children turn in our hands, because we do so endeavour by force and fear to make them serve God, instead of teaching them they *are* God's children, and what He expects from them. " Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves." Apparently the meek and loving, but in reality tearing and cruel, always dealing with men on the ground of their salvation, instead of upon the ground of being God's children. Do men gather grapes of thorns? Can there be the joy of God, where there is threatening, scolding, menacing? or can men gather figs of thistles? Can there be sweet fellowship with God and with one another, where all that is done by the teachers is to prick, to wound, to irritate, to tease?

Understand this matter then—you are the body, the one body, the body of the *Son*; and as ye are so, serve God your Father in the unity of the sonship of Christ, and in the spirit of the sonship. Let the teachers not be briars and thorns, but ministers of the Spirit, the Spirit of the son, the ministers of the true righteousness, which is not of the law (what have we to do with the law? the law is made for the unrighteous), but ministers of the righteousness of Christ, namely, the Spirit. And be ye the willing and living recipients of that Spirit, whereby ye cry *Abba, Father*, and love His will and do it, not *servilely*, but keeping the precept "ye shall do no servile work,"—but from the heart, from the spirit of *adoption*. And do we not eat the flesh and drink the blood, that is the nourishment of that one body, even the flesh and blood of that

Son, that serves God as a son and not as a slave—freely, and does no servile work? Therefore understand what the Epistle and the Gospel say to you to-day, and draw near and receive and be thankful.

Rom. viii., 12-17; Matt. vii., 15-21.

GOD is ever seeking to remind us, that we belong to Him, “that we are not our own;” that we are even *now* partially delivered from the evil state of oppression and tyranny, to which we subjected ourselves, and would ever subject ourselves, if left alone; and that we shall, if we continue and abide faithful in this state of present and partial deliverance, eventually arrive at not only *perfect deliverance*, but at entire and perfect capability of serving and pleasing God, and of possessing for ever the sunshine of His favour and blessing. The *partial* deliverance, which we have now received is this, that we, in our spirits, are set free from the law of sin and death; that we are, even now, made partakers of the Spirit of life; that we are, as regards our spiritual existence, *not in the flesh*, for we are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, since the “Spirit of God dwelleth in us.” The body indeed is unfruitful, the body is dead because of sin; the body has to be laid aside, the body of humiliation has to be changed by resurrection, or changed without death—but we have received the Spirit of life, we are quickened by the Spirit of life, and *live*; we are alive, spiritually alive, by the power of the Holy Ghost, and when our

bodies are changed, then in body, soul, and spirit, we shall be like the Lord, the second Adam. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to live after the flesh," for we are *not in the flesh*, though we are still in the body, the body of corruption. To live after the flesh, is to *die*, to mortify the deeds of the body, or bring into death, to refuse to be led by our flesh, is to *live*. They are the sons of God, who do not live after the flesh, who do not follow the dictates of the fleshly mind, but who are led by the Spirit. As children, (for ye are children of God), ye have received the spirit of adoption, by reason of which ye cry, "Abba, Father,"—"Our Father which art in heaven." Therefore ye can, and do, set your affections on things above. You are baptized into death, that your bodies may be mortified by your refusing to live after the flesh.

True mortification of the flesh consists, not in refusing the bounties and mercies and blessings of God—this is Satan's way of *sanctifying* the flesh—this is truly living after the flesh, flesh *improved*. True mortification consists in refusing to be *led* by the flesh, and in being *led* by the Spirit given by Jesus Christ. True mortification consists in living before God as His children ; letting His Spirit, which is given to you, which has quickened you, letting it fill every *pore of your being*, your thoughts, your desires, your affections ; and *how* ? by refusing to accept, or use, or enjoy anything, even life itself, otherwise than as a *member* of Christ. Forget that you are a member, a quickened member of Christ, and the members of your body will take possession of your very heart's core ;—for-

get that you are a member of Christ, and you will—nay, you must—cleave to and grovel in the dust of the earth. You cannot *help* loving the world and the things of the world, except by knowing you are a member of Christ; realize *that*, and you cannot love the world. The full-grown man cannot love the tinselled toy of the child. The *heir of God's estate* cannot take up with, and solace himself with feeding and clothing and indulging a body, which he longs to put off in order to enter into his true inheritance. They, that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, and you especially, the younger members of Christ's church, ever remember you are heirs of a kingdom, which you are about to receive; ever remember you are God's children; ever remember you have received the Spirit of life, and therefore, whilst you receive and enjoy with gratitude the mercies and blessings of God (receive them with gladness of heart), yet let it be your chief, yea, your one thought, that you may so please God, that He can have fellowship in your joy. Let it be your one thought to desire what God desires, to love what He loves, and carry about with you in your daily life the thought, that you are waiting for a kingdom, which is to be revealed at the coming of Jesus Christ. Every baptized person is and must be following one or other of the two natures which He possesses: either the corrupt affections of the corrupt nature, the flesh,—or the dictates and motions of hat

divine life, which Christ has given him. Now, "if we live in the Spirit let us also walk in the Spirit," waiting and hoping for the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

I Cor. x., 1-13; Luke xvi., 1-9.

THE Epistle shows us a people offending in every way—looking back, impatient to go forward, turning aside, refusing the guidance provided for them, recoiling from the end, to which that guidance conducted. They strove to return to Egypt; the people and the priest, without the help of the law-giver, organized a service of God, under the blessing of which they might proceed without loss of time to the land of promise. Having set up an unauthorized worship of the true God, they next served false gods, and debauched themselves with their votaries; from idolatry against the second commandment proceeding to idolatry against the first; by double idolatry they lose their discernment of God's hand, and tempt Christ; by tempting Christ, the Anointed One, they are prepared to reject the kingdom, of which Christ's anointing is the earnest, and the preparation. There are five falls, one more grievous than another; the first consisting in the going back, in heart, into Egypt; the last in the refusal to go forward into Canaan. Between the first and the last are the formal sins of the lesser and the greater idolatry, and the refusal to know the Saviour by His name Christ. The

last sin but one in the series, is a sin against Christ. The last sin of all is the starting back through fear and distrust from the promised land, after seeing its rich fruits in the sample set before them by the men who searched it. For this sin they were “destroyed of the destroyer; they fell in the wilderness,” they “drew back unto perdition.” The sin before the last is the rejection of Him, who is the Preacher of the gospel of the kingdom, and the Giver of the earnest of it. Just before the end, God works emphatically to manifest Christ, to make known the powers and resources, the manifold grace, which belongs to His Son as the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost. The truth concerning the Spirit coming first, then the truth concerning the kingdom. The heir of the kingdom is the Righteous Man. When His righteousness was declared, at the river where He was baptized, then the Holy Ghost descended upon Him. His joint-heirs are men, whom He first makes partakers of His righteousness, and then partakers of His anointing. Partakers are they first of His righteousness, then of His Spirit of glory, lastly of His kingdom itself. For this triple end He is made known as Christ, and before the last sin can be committed by the people, who had previously fallen under successive temptations, He specially and signally works according to the meaning of that name. In the time of the end, to the people, who have backslidden from Him in many ways, and wearied Him with many provocations, God causes Christ to be preached and to be manifested. He makes the anointing to flow again, and the ordinances, whereby it can be con-

veyed and can operate again, to appear, and to work amongst His people. When this work is done, when this testimony is borne, the last event takes place, the gates of the kingdom of heaven are opened unto all who are prepared to enter thereby, and the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, is put in possession of the promised inheritance, has passed from the earnest to the fulness of the gift. They who tempted Christ were "bitten of serpents." What power shall save from the assault and possession of evil angels, the church which refuses to know Jesus, her Lord, as the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost? Babylon first casts out the Spirit of God, and then is made the habitation of devils, and the hold of "every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

All these typical sins were committed by a people confident in themselves, and judging and murmuring against God's way of dealing with them. They complained against Moses and against God. The church, to which the warning against the anti-typical sins was given, was also full of self-confidence, and had already yielded to the spirit of contempt and distrust towards the ministers of Christ. Paul said to them, "ye are rich, ye are full, ye have reigned without us." They seemed to be those, in whom the sacraments of Christ's institution might be said to have taken the deepest effect. They had mighty gifts to show, as the evidence and proof that Christ's seal was upon them; to every one of them could be addressed the warning, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Such language was applicable to

them, who were consciously strong, "who came behind in no gift," and yet who were weak and almost defenceless, notwithstanding their many gifts. In the history of Israel, the greatest weakness was exhibited by the strongest of the judges; the greatest folly appeared in the wisest of the kings. Obedience to God and not endowment from Him is the sure defence of every man. In all the sins enumerated the people were alone, without their leader. Had they followed their leader, they would have escaped them all; it was again the woman without her husband, deceived by the seducing spirit. The sins before us are those of the high-spirited, the courageous, the self-confident. Let us not be of such who tempt God, but let us be of those, who are preserved from all temptations by proving His faithfulness. "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." He is faithful, that is, He will keep faith; He will not disappoint the hopes, which He has raised. He is faithful, that is, He stands by what He has instituted; He remembers and keeps what He has promised; He has made a covenant and will respect the terms of it. If we forsake His appointments and forget His promises, we are not proving His faithfulness, although, in the end we may find mercy and be saved, yet so as by fire. Let us seek to be saved in such a way, as shall magnify God's faithfulness as well as His mercy. So shall we be more than conquerors, and have an abundant entrance ministered unto us into His everlasting kingdom.

I Cor. x., 1-13; Luke xvi., 1-9.

THE time of trial and temptation is not passed. The church is destined to go through a course of trials and temptations, in the overcoming of which God will be glorified, and because of her faith and patience in overcoming which, God shall glorify her. Peter writes, " Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you as though some strange thing happened to you, but rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that, when His glory shall be revealed ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. On their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified." The sufferings of God's saints, their temptations, and trials are known unto God ; they are sent by Him, they come not by chance, they are not sent without a purpose and object, the purpose being effected, the trial or temptation ceaseth, and they who have withstood, who have overcome, they receive fresh present grace, fresh power to withstand, fresh confidence in the present help of God, fresh assurance that He is ever near them, that He will deliver them in six troubles, and that in seven no evil shall come nigh their dwelling. Remember Job, robbed of all his earthly possessions, afflicted with the loss of his children, his body covered with sores and boils, his three friends irritating him by their

false reasoning, and his wife urging him to “ curse God and die,” and he himself still clinging to his integrity, and longing to come to God, and hear from Him, why He was pleased thus to deal with a poor helpless worm of the earth. Job is an example of suffering and patience, and also of the end of the Lord, that He is very pitiful and of tender mercy. The three children cast into the fiery furnace, because they refused to bow down before the golden image, which Nebuchadnezzar set up ; Daniel cast into the lion’s den, because he continued to pray to God, when a decree of Darius had gone forth that none should ask a petition or make a prayer to any God or man, save to the king himself, for thirty days—these are examples of the temptations, to which God’s children will be exposed, in the overcoming of which God will be glorified.

In the Epistle we have pointed out to us other forms of temptation, to which God’s children are exposed in this world ; temptations under which some of the Israelites gave way, after being delivered out of the land of Egypt, and their carcases fell in the wilderness. They had seen God’s wonders in Egypt, and had witnessed the deliverance, which He wrought for them, when with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm He brought them forth from the house of bondage, and yet they rebelled against Him. When He fed them with manna, they loathed the angels’ food, and longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt, the onions and garlick. During the absence of Moses in the mount they committed idolatry, forgetting him, whom God had sent, and by whose hand

He had delivered them out of Egypt, and made golden calves, saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel." They committed fornication, and sought after the gods of the heathen round about, eating of their sacrifices, which were offered to devils, and not to God. They tempted Christ, doubting of His will and power to feed them, and to supply all their wants. They murmured against Him, who had brought them to the borders of the land, and were afraid before their enemies, forgetting the wonders which God had wrought for them in Egypt.

The enumeration of these temptations of the children of Israel, which happened to them for ensamples, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world are come, is especially directed to make us both confident and fearful; confident in the sure help of the Almighty, and fearful lest we should fail of the grace of God, and lose our reward, and come into that greater condemnation, which shall overwhelm those who trample under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace. The temptations, to which we are exposed are none other than such as are common to man, and yet they are such as are not easy to bear; they are such as are not joyous, but grievous for the time, they are often such that they seem to be scarcely bearable, but there is the promise, that God will with the temptation make a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it. Moses, with the prospect of the greatest worldly advantages before him, "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a

season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward,"—and the reward held out to us is our inducement to persevere. The flesh-pots of Egypt, the garlick and the onions represent those seductive earthly pleasures, which have their charm, especially for the young, for those who while impressed with a sense of religion generally, do not sufficiently apprehend the duty of self-denial, or appreciate the reward which is held out to them. Every profession and calling in life requires a sacrifice, a sacrifice of time, of pleasure and enjoyment, a preparation and devotedness to the object aimed at, in order to ensure success, and this is cheerfully borne by those who have regard to the recompence. While those, who fail to show this devotedness, they are not by any arbitrary rule, but by a law of necessity, excluded from the attainment of the prize, of which they are shown to be unworthy.

But these temptations, which happened to the Israelites for such an example, have not only a particular, but also a universal application. According to the general analogy of scripture, there cannot be any doubt, that the enumeration in the Epistle comprises, generally and characteristicallly, the several forms of temptation, to which the Christian church has been exposed, and by which her progress to perfection, her attaining to the promise of the kingdom has hitherto been hindered. And in this view it is especially incumbent upon us to take example, not only from that which happened to the Jews, but from that which has befallen the Christian church, whose course has been so

chequered with good and evil, amongst whom, generation after generation have fallen, as it were in the wilderness, until the hope is well nigh lost ; the recompense of reward is so little regarded, that there are few, who care to bear reproach for the name of Christ, few who care to follow those, whom God has appointed as rulers and leaders of His people, to bring them to the promised inheritance ; few who do not prefer the intellectual excitement of human wisdom to that fulness of the Spirit in which there is no excess ; few who do not choose to follow idols of their own, rather than to abide in the faithful following of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of those by whom He leadeth them on unto their glorious inheritance. Let it not be so with us. We are invited to come to the table of the Lord ; let us flee from idolatry, we partake of a holy feast, a feast of heavenly food ; let us eschew earthly pleasures, the true manna is given to us, bread of heaven, and living waters ; let us eat and drink with thanksgiving. We need to be self-denying, filled with a spirit of obedience and the spirit of the fear of the Lord ; always ready to renounce earthly pleasures, to put away all sin and uncleanness, knowing that holiness becometh the house of the Lord, and bearing in mind those words, with which we draw near to the table of the Lord :—Holy things for holy persons, there is One holy : even one Lord Jesus Christ, in whom are we to the glory of God the Father.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

I Cor. xii., 1-11; Luke xix., 41.

IT would almost seem, that it was in a prophetic spirit the church chose and put together the Epistle and Gospel of this day. The longing of the Spirit of God, expressed by the apostle, that the church should not be ignorant of, but understand, what is the meaning and intent of spiritual gifts, how to use them, and what they are for; and in the Gospel, the lament of our Lord, that Jerusalem did not know the time of her visitation, and the ruinous consequences of not knowing it. Spiritual gifts, God working, Christ ministering, the Holy Ghost acting in diversity of gifts, in and by men, to separate, to form, to fill, to perfect the body of Christ; and the church refusing to let God work, Christ minister, and the Holy Ghost act, speak, or do, although God again visits them.

The day of visitation — what does that mean? God knows all things, foreknows them all before they happen, yet He does not act upon that knowledge. He acts by putting men to the proof. He visits them in some way; and by bringing out their thoughts into overt open acts, He then shows, that He is justified in acting severely with them. Did He not know what

Adam and Eve had done? Yet, nevertheless, He came down, He visited them, He called them and asked them, and convicted them out of their own mouths. Did He not know what the people of Babel were doing, and their presumption? Nevertheless, He said, Let us go down and see if this be the case. Did He not know what the inhabitants of Sodom were doing? Yet He visited them by His two angels, and proved their wickedness. Yes, He in Christ, deals with men as a man deals with men. When the time of the Jews drew near its end, then He visited them. He knew full well all that they would do, yet He visited them, and proved them, as a man proves men. He visited them by John the Baptist, then by the Lord Himself, then by the apostles. He tried by John to recover them to the walking in the law of Moses, which they pretended so to revere. He tried to lead them into the true spiritual intent and meaning of the law by the Lord. He tried to get them to admit the Holy Spirit to write God's laws in their hearts by the apostles, and other gifts. They did not, they *would* not know the time of their "visitation."

It is so now. God is visiting His people to prove them. He says: Return to the power of this dispensation—the spiritual. I send you what is analogous to John the Baptist, to recall you to all that was given at the beginning. I send you again those by whom God will work, Christ will minister, and the Holy Ghost act; those by whom He will put God's laws in your hearts, and write them in your minds. He says: I hear an evil report of the state of the church; I hear, that truth is broken up and lost among

them, and that falsehood prevails. I hear that they are ignorant of all spiritual gifts, and opposed to them. I will visit them ; I will take proof of them, whether they are so, and whether they, being instructed, will return and repent. But they will not know the day of their visitation, let the charmer charm never so wisely, therefore destruction cometh. The Lord says: Let us go down. Now is the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Let us go down by the Holy Ghost, and visit them, and see whether these things be so. Soon also there will be a blasphemous pretender to the kingdom, and the Lord will say: Let us go down, I hear there is one, who claims to be God, and king of all the earth, and has set his seat on My holy mountain, —and then He will come down, in the person of the King, and take proof of the fact, and destroy the false usurper.

It is the time of your visitation. Truth hath visited you. Abide in the truth. "I have no greater joy than to hear that My children walk in the truth." The Lord says this to you, the apostles say it to you. Truth has been restored ; everywhere else it is either broken, or mingled with falsehood. The Holy Spirit's presence is here, and the joy of the kingdom. Everywhere else there is either leavened bread, or the cup withholden,—God has given to you the sign of His having visited His church ; He gives you unleavened bread and the cup. It is the token of restored, unmixed truth, and of the joy and presence of the Holy Ghost. While others are ignorant of, know not the time of their visitation, you have recognized it. Abide in the truth, and walk in the truth.

I Cor. xii., 1-11; Luke xix., 41.

IN the Epistle we are taught how highly endowed, how enriched with all spiritual blessings, is the church as the body, the true and real body of the risen and ascended Man, seated at God's right hand. The church has received the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the ministries of the Lord, the operations or in-workings of God. Such is the church in her true and real condition as the body of Christ. The Gospel tells us of Jesus, who, when He was on earth, wept as He drew near to the beloved city and beheld it; and well He might. He found the temple turned into a place of merchandize, and in that city, and in that temple, whilst He taught daily, chief priests and scribes and the chiefs of the people plotted against Him, and sought to destroy Him. Truly these two passages of holy scripture are not brought thus together without design, nor is the lesson therein taught, one of little import. The essence of real religion consists in being of one mind with the Lord; of entering into the fellowship of His sorrows, the fellowship of His joys, the desires of His heart, the longings of His soul. He is now absent, yet is He one with us; He is now absent, yet by the in-working and manifestation of His Spirit, He would lead us into the participation and sharing of His sorrows, and joys, and pleadings. In religion, as in earthly things, we can be, and are ever inclined to be *selfish*; to "seek our own

things, not the things of Jesus Christ." Oh how little did men enter into the bitter grief of that Man of sorrows, who said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" of Him who wept, and said, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." Terrible words! full of agony! full of judgment! Jerusalem, the city of the great king, the joy of the whole earth, sealed up to judgment! "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

Who can read what the church is called to, as described in the Epistle, what her endowment is, the description of the last and perilous times, the signs of apostacy, and turn their eyes to Christendom as it now is, and see brother against brother, the house divided, church against church, some called by one name, some by another; the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the ministries of the Lord, the operations of God, much forgotten, often ignored, at best shorn and weakened. Who can think of these things, and not believe but that He, who wept as He descended the mount of Olivet, and looked on the doomed city, now weeps, and mourns, and grieves for His body's sake, the church, and would lead us, yea, seeks to bring us into the "fellowship of His sorrows?" Truly, brethren, our calling is to be conformed to His image, to be conformed to His death, to have the fellowship of His sufferings; to arm ourselves with His mind, to cease from sin by suffering in the flesh, the sufferings

of Christ. This is our calling as members of the body of Christ. This is the calling of all who are baptized into Christ; in an especial manner is it the calling and privilege of those, to whom grace has been given to perceive and recognize, the "quenching of the Spirit," the "despising of prophesying," the absence of the fourfold ministries of the risen Lord, and who know and believe that He has arisen to have mercy upon Zion. If our individual salvation had been the point, the object, that we should set before us; if to be saved after death, was *the* one thing we should desire, there had been no need of our being gathered out of the various communities of Christendom, for we could be saved in any of these. But this is not the object for which we have been gathered, for which we have been separated from all sects and parties, and yet in reality brought nearer to them all. The object has been, that we might be the more able to enter into the fellowship of the sorrows and griefs of the Lord, and so the more enabled to enter into, and carry on, on the earth, that intercession, which He, the Head, carries on in its fulness in the heavens. To bring before God day by day, morning by morning, night by night on that altar, whereon the memorials of the sacrifice of Christ are presented before God, the supplications, and prayers, and intercessions of the whole church of God. It is for this, that we have been taught to enter into the truth of the one body, which none can enter into, if "ignorant respecting spiritual gifts." It is for this apostles are restored, that the ordinances given at the beginning have been restored, that forms and

services gathered into one out of dispersions and division have been brought out, even that the pleadings of the Lord, His longings, His intercession may go up from the body. In a word, that *His* prayer, in all the fulness of its meaning, in all its depth and largeness may be presented before God, so that now entering into the fellowship of His sorrows and prayers, we, and the whole church may have fellowship in His joy, in the day of His appearing. They who sow in tears, shall reap in joy. Let us be thus minded.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

I Cor. xv., 1-11; Luke xviii., 9-14.

THE Pharisee thought he was in a condition fit for rendering unto God all the service which God required at his hand. He separated himself, before God separated him. He attained not unto sanctification, but unto a counterfeit of it. What man could do for himself, he did; but he knew not, what God could do for man. The Pharisee is the same in every age. He is religious, but not in the true way. He has not got what God wants to give, and yet he is satisfied. He is rich, he is full, he reigns, before God has enriched him, filled him, crowned him. He is satisfied, while he is lower than the dispensation under which he is placed. He has not got the best thing to be had in his day, but is unconscious of his deficiency. He does not mourn because of his shortcoming. He is ignorant of God's standard, or despises it. He substitutes for it a model of his own; he is a self-taught, a self-made man. When confronted with the man, whom God has taught, whom God has made, he is weighed in the balance and found wanting. Jesus Christ was the true Nazarite, separated by God; the Pharisee was a spurious Nazarite, separated by

himself. The Pharisee, who kept part of the law in man's way, was found out when he came in contact with the righteous and holy Man, who kept all the law in God's way. The Pharisee was the imitation of a good thing. He witnessed for consecration unto God, only he had not the true consecration. He took to himself the honour and praise of true consecration, though he had it not. He thanked God, without receiving from God that, which should call forth thanksgiving. God's works should praise Him. Here was a work affecting to praise God, which was not God's work at all. Christ warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. The leaven of the Pharisee is hypocrisy; imitation of a work of God, not experience of it. The Jewish Pharisee was zealous for the law, without knowing its full meaning, or experiencing its full force; the Christian Pharisee is zealous for the Spirit, while ignorant of the things concerning the Spirit, and unconscious of the operations according to which the Spirit would work. What shall preserve us from thinking we have attained, before we have attained? First, and chiefly, the knowledge of the mark, unto which God would have us attain. I say chiefly, because even that knowledge cannot, of itself, make us humble. God's grace in our hearts can alone make us humble. But that grace is put forth in behalf of those, who have learnt of God what God wants to make of them; who know first His purposed standard, and then desire to be modelled according to it. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness." He loves those who desire to fulfil the

end of their existence, and in order thereunto to be brought into the fit and perfect condition for that fulfilment, He sets them in the way of attaining the end, and until the end be fully attained, He preserves them from boasting. The end of our existence was frustrated for awhile by Adam's fall. Till we escape from all the evil consequences of that fall, and be changed from our likeness to the first Adam who fell, into the likeness of the last Adam, who raised humanity from the fallen condition, and made it fit to be received into the highest place, even to the right hand of God,—we are not in the condition of fulfilling the end of our existence, of taking our proper place in the midst of the universe of God. Till we stand before God in the image of the last Adam, He cannot set us in our predestined place, nor show us our appointed work. The first Adam did not do what God made man to perform ; he turned aside, and failed in his training. The last Adam is prepared to sustain man's place, and do man's work, in the creation of God. He waits for the number of men to be completed, whom He is bringing into participation in the condition, which He has attained unto, and who shall be engaged with Him in the work, which lies before Him to be accomplished. When we shall have perfected the transition from the first to the last Adam, we shall have finished our training, and our true employment shall begin. We may not say, that we have attained, until we can say that the resurrection has become a fact. “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for

which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We must follow him, who thus spake in desiring "to be found in Christ, if by any means we might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

The combination of the Epistle and Gospel of this week seems intended by the church to teach us, that the true remedy against Pharisaism is to be found in the true doctrine concerning the resurrection. "Circumcision availeth nothing, neither uncircumcision, but a new creature." Man, half-renewed, is not the new creature. The half-renewed rejoices in hope, the new creature rejoices in full fruition. The Epistle shows us how God separates men for His service; the Gospel, how men strive to separate themselves. Let us labour to be separated from men after God's manner of separation. "God has set apart Him that is godly for Himself." Behold where He has set Him. Thither are we called, and in the fulness of our being, as He has taken into heaven not only the soul, but also the body of man. We cannot attain to the resurrection as individuals, or as one generation of believers separate from all others; we must wait for the resurrection of the just, for the salvation of the body, for the day of the manifestation of the sons of God. But in every generation we can attain unto the "power" of Christ's resurrection, unto the power, which He, raised

from the dead, exerts in all, who trust Him. What this power can make us, we are called to be. To strive to be anything religiously without the power of Christ's resurrection, is to fall into the snare of the Pharisee. To yield to the power of Christ's resurrection, is to submit to that, which shall conform us to God *now* in our mind, and in due time bring our bodies as well to the glory of their own resurrection.

I Cor. xv., 1-11; Luke xviii., 9-14.

WE need continually to be reminded of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, though we have received and are standing fast in it. Therefore, says the apostle, I give you to know, I bring to your knowledge once again, the Gospel which I preached, which you received, in which you stand, have been standing, and of which, if you are to be saved by it, you must lay fast hold. If you do not lay hold of it, and so abide, standing in it, vain will it have been, that you should ever have believed. The foundations of this saving Gospel, which Paul had previously received, which when he had received he preached to the Corinthians, and they had received, are first of all the death of Christ for our sins, as foreshown before the law and in the law, and foretold by David and all the prophets; then next, that He was buried, the grave received Him out of this sinful mortal world, from which He was thus delivered,

and then thirdly, the grave yielded Him up, and He was born again, as it were from the womb of the old creation into the new life, the spiritual life of the new creation—Heir of the new heavens and of the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, and whither He has gone to prepare a place for His disciples. Of the fact of this resurrection the Lord had provided many and competent witnesses; not only was He seen of the twelve, but He was seen on one occasion by five hundred brethren at once. At length he was seen of Paul, who had (probably, almost certainly) never seen Him when on earth, and so was no competent witness of the fact of the resurrection to unbelievers. But herein the Lord had a special purpose towards Paul, and through him to the Gentiles; therefore He appeared to him in a bright shining glory, and made Himself known to him. “Who art thou, Lord?” for as yet Paul knew Him not. “I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest;” and so He compelled him to obedience. “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” and so the Lord converted him, and sent Ananias to baptize him, and then He sent him forth, a chosen vessel unto Himself, and separated unto this end even from his birth, that he might bear the name of Jesus before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel, and might preach the Gospel which had been revealed to him; the mystery of the election from Jews and Gentiles, constituted into one body; the body of Him, that was raised from the dead, that He might fill all things, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. Alas! the work of Paul was an

abortive work. He as an apostle was as one born out of due season ; he, indeed, through the grace given to him, was faithful unto death ; he finished his course, he kept the faith, he waits for the crown ; it is laid up for him, for he hath not yet received it. Those to whom he preached would not go on unto perfection, his word was rejected, his ministry despised. How long, Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not avenge his cause, the cause of all those who follow his faith, the cause of those now sent forth by Thee to preach the Gospel, which he preached, to finish and perfect the work, which He began, and which through the unbelief of Thy children hath failed even until now! Alas, shall these Thy servants, the last apostles, also be exhibited a scorn and derision of all men ; shall they also be manifested as born out of due time, and their work seem to fail, and they be taken away from Thy church and vanish from her sight ? O brethren, let us not follow the same example of unbelief, which hath seemed, even to this day, to make faith vain, and the word of God void and of none effect. Keep in memory the Gospel, which hath been preached unto you, and by which ye shall be saved. Lay fast hold of the truth that ye are very members of Him that is risen from the dead, of His flesh and of His bones ; that in Him ye are partakers of the Divine nature, and that thus, and thus only, ye can escape the corruptions, that are in the world through lust.

The Pharisees boast themselves in the sanctimoniousness of their own sect, they look forward to their own predominance in Israel, and to the predominance of Israel

over the world ; thus giving thanks to God, they proclaim themselves contented with some kingdom of heaven on earth, which they are to win. It is plain therefore that they know not the mystery of the death, or of the resurrection of Christ. On the other hand, the publican is justified, because he renounces himself, and all that is of man. If he is to be justified, God must justify him ; his hope is only in God.—Finally, there is no hope but in the resurrection from among the dead. So long as the people of God are content with their progress in this world, lukewarm as to the attainment of the resurrection, so long their fancied righteousness, the improvement of the age, the spread of the profession of religion, will puff them up with vain glory ; so long they will say, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing. If only they will know, that they are wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked, they shall find gold tried in the fire ; white raiment fit to deck the followers of the Lamb ; ointment, even the unction from the Holy One, which shall enable them to see Him even as He is, and prepare them to be made like unto Him when He cometh in His glory.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

2 Cor. iii., 4-9; Mark vii., 31.

THE portion of holy scripture selected for the Epistle of this day is a part of that, in which the apostle Paul is speaking of the ministry of Christ, of the new testament; contrasting it with the ministry of Moses under the old testament dispensation. *That* had a glory, for it was of God, received from God, in such a way as to impart a visible glory to His minister, so that those to whom he ministered could not look upon his face; it was needful that a veil should be put upon his countenance. Yet was it a ministry of condemnation, a ministry of law to convince of sin, and not a ministry of *life*. Herein lies the contrast—the Christian ministry is a ministry of *life*, not of *letter*, but of *life*. Herein is the excess of glory, not by visible manifestation in the persons, who have the ministry, but in the power of their ministration. There was no visible glory upon the Man Christ Jesus in His ministration on the earth. There is no visible glory on those, whom He hath set to minister His Word and Spirit. They are earthen vessels, weak and vile in themselves, but blessed channels of *life* and *power* upon the hearts and spirits and bodies of men; and that in proportion to the faith exercised by

those who minister and by those who are ministered to. This the apostle avows when he says, " Such trust have we through Christ to God-ward; not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." Though called and ordained to this ministry and thereby fully authorized to its exercise, there is no inherent power to give or withhold of ourselves, but the Holy Ghost is present with us to do the will of God. We have only to walk in faith, in love, and in obedience, and the Lord will do all His work by us. Do we baptize? it is a ministry of the Spirit, whereby the regenerate grace of God is ministered. Do we consecrate bread and wine to be the body and blood of Christ and give it out to the members of the body of Christ? it is spiritual food, whereby they are made to grow. Do we minister the word of the Gospel? it is made a word of power subduing them to Christ, and helping the church of Christ to walk in righteousness, and to go on to perfection. Do we, the apostles, lay hands on Christ's members? we impart to them the gift of the Holy Ghost, whereby they are strengthened in every grace and qualified to exercise every gift of the Holy Ghost. Do we, the apostles of the Lord, ordain men to the exercise of the priesthood? we through Christ put on them an indelible name and character, in which, if they abide faithful, they shall receive a most glorious reward. These are the glories of the Christian ministry, in which they far exceed the ministries of which Moses was the head—not denying to *it* a glory.

Does this contrast minister to the pride or self-complacency of the church of Christ in its ministers or members? God forbid. If we exalt ourselves, we shall be humbled, if we humble ourselves, we shall be exalted. And here is much cause of humbling, because with this high calling upon the church of Christ, how low her condition, how little faith how little love! how little power! Yet let us not despair; the Lord is ever the same. The fountain is full, though the pipes are narrow and small, yet some droppings flow through them, and we have earnests of the longing desire of the heart of Christ, that a *larger* measure of His blessing should flow forth. Let us meet that desire with enlarged hearts, that there may be no straitening in us; there is none in Him. Let faith be in lively exercise, for according to our faith shall it be unto us. Let us follow the example of Jesus, set before us in the Gospel of the day; when the deaf and dumb man was brought to Him, He used the means which his wisdom dictated. He put His fingers into his ears, and spat and touched his tongue, but was that all? No; “He looked up to heaven, and sighed, and spake, Ephatha—be opened—and straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue loosed.” Whether a work is to be done on the body or on the spirit, the power to accomplish it is the same. The *means* should be used, with prayer, and simple dependence on power from above and the Lord will honour the same. It is remarkable, how it pleases God to associate means with the end. We see it in appointed sacraments; we see it in all God’s ways. *Matter* is not to be despised, nor

act, nor word to be withholden; all are of God, and all to be used according to His will. By laying on of hands, by anointing, the sick and oppressed are delivered, by word and act the spirits of men are blessed; and both and all by faith in the power of the Living Head.

2 Cor. iii., 4-9; Mark vii., 31.

WE are confident that we can do what we have said. What did Paul say he could do? He said he could make the church "the Epistle of Christ." Men look upon an epistle, that they may see what is written upon it. The world looks upon the church, and sees Christ. That which is contained in a letter is different from that, of which the substance of the letter is made. The substance of the letter is parchment or paper, the contents are the thoughts, the expression of the mind of some writer. The substance of the church is human nature, human society; that which "is seen and read of all men," is Christ. The world is to know that Christ is, and what He is, by looking at the church. The church which does not show Christ, as the parchment or paper shows what is written upon it—is not the true church, at least, is not the true church in its true condition of existence. Paul said, "I do not want a letter of recommendation from man; the church is my letter of recommendation—it is the evidence of my mission from God and from Christ." What is the proof, that you are to be

trusted? said the world to Paul. What is the proof, that you belong to God and to Christ? "Here is my proof," said the apostle, "Christ in the church. I must be the minister of Christ, for I have brought down Christ from heaven into the church." In the church you behold Him. You look upon the church and see—not men, women, and children, living the life of the man, who fell away from God, but you see Christ living, through men, women, and children, the life of God, manifesting that men, women, and children are His members, and, as His members, children of God, and, as children of God, heirs of the kingdom of God, of the world to come.

This is the holiness which God looks for in the church. Does He find it? Does He see in the church this reflex, this representation, this image of Christ? The ministry, which God hath set in the church, is able to produce this result. If this result is not seen, then either the ministry set of God in the church no longer exists, or if it exists, its operation is hindered, the ministers are reluctant to act, or the people will not tolerate the action. We have no confidence in ourselves, that we can achieve anything, there is nothing in us on which we can calculate; but we have confidence in God, who gives to us, as the ministers of His Son, to dispense His Spirit. By giving the Spirit of Christ, we make men "the epistle of Christ." God hath enabled us to be ministers, dispensers of the new covenant, which He has made with men.

God made a covenant with men—an agreement from mount Sinai. He said, here is My law, look at it, learn

it, keep it. He made a new covenant on the day of Pentecost. He said, here is My Spirit, let Him enter into you and possess you, yield to Him, grieve Him not, live by Him, serve as He enableth you to serve. When God made the first covenant or agreement with Israel, He had Moses with Him on the mount. When He made the second covenant, He had Jesus with Him in heaven at His own right hand. The law came by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ made His apostles deacons of the grace of God. Deacons, as a ministry in the church, had to distribute the goods of the church amongst the poor. When apostles are called deacons, as in the Epistle, it is meant, that they dispense something to the church. That which they dispense, is the Holy Spirit of God and of Christ. God gave by the hand of Moses a letter, which killed. God gave by His Son the Spirit, which giveth life. We are confident, said the holy servant of God, we, the church of God is the place of confidence—confidence of feeling, confidence of speech—but it must be set upon the right basis. We are sure, he said, that we can make you perfect. But that depends upon our giving unto you, what comes through us out from God. It depends upon your receiving the same. We have nothing to give as from ourselves; we are poor vessels of clay; but in these vessels of clay God puts treasure. In that treasure there is excellency of power—there is a hyperbole of power literally. There is a force, which you cannot exaggerate, which you cannot over-estimate, a power, which can effect results beyond what you can

act or think. The power is not deposited in the vessel as in a reservoir; it is not the property of the vessel, which contains it and pours it forth; it is of God—literally from God, out from God—the promise of the Father fulfilled unto Christ, the First-born; bestowed by Christ, according to the will of God, upon His body the church; dispensed by Him, through His apostles, and with the instrumentality of all His ministries, by whom His body is perfected, by whom His body attains to perfect manhood, becomes the man-child, reaches to the measure of the stature, which qualifies it to be the fulness of Christ, His help, in conjunction with which He shall rule the world in righteousness and do all the will of God.

Who shall not mourn, when the power of God, by which we are perfected, is hindered in its operation? Woe be to us if the treasure be lost. What shall replace it? The church mourns when the vessels, which contained the treasure, are broken. But let the cry unto God be redoubled, that though the vessels be broken, God may somehow or another continue to His people the possession and use and enjoyment of the treasure. What is the church without the Spirit of Christ, her Head? The contrast in the Gospel shows us. Behold the poor deaf and speechless man. The world of outward harmonies is lost upon him; the voice of God, the many sounds from His creation, are addressed to him in vain; and should he hear them, he can give no response, hearing and speech are bound together. Christ comes to him.

He separates him unto Himself; He acts upon him; He says to the obstructed channels of hearing and of speech: be opened. He causeth the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak; free interchange is effected between the subject of the miracle and the universe, which surrounds him. So with the church, receiving the Spirit from the Lord; we hear God's voice and understand it; and He hears our voice, issuing from us in prayer and praise and thanksgiving; in testimony for Him; in pleading with His creatures to restore to Him their allegiance and service; in interpretations of His word of hope to all creatures suffering together under the bondage of corruption, under the yoke of vanity.

In the Epistle and Gospel we still behold Christ, liberating the ear and tongue and the whole being of man—Christ, in His own person, working His own work of mercy and goodness—Christ, by the ministers of His church, continuing to give deliverance and blessing. May we be enabled to retain Him amongst us in the power of His Spirit, till we see Him returning with all His chosen servants, no longer vessels to be broken and laid aside for weakness and unprofitableness, but vessels made to abide, made to honour, made for glorious service never to end—never to be interrupted!

Now we sorrow, but not without hope. And for whom shall we hope more confidently to see him with his Lord, than for him, beloved of all, whom last we have lost for a season—for a little season may it be*. Many,

* This homily was delivered shortly after the death of Mr. F. Sitwell.

I believe, will welcome him to the everlasting habitations, for to many he gave sympathy and help and blessing. To many did he lead the way, and all were glad to follow whom all loved. May the Lord soon come—the great Shepherd of the sheep—to gather all His flock, and to give to all His servants, by whom He has tended them and blessed them, their full and everlasting reward.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Gal. iii., 16-22; Luke x., 23-37.

BLESSED be God, that His promises have been made not to us frail and fallible creatures, who would assuredly have forfeited them, but unto the *seed*, even unto Christ. Blessed be God, that His covenant is not with us, who, left to our deceitful and desperately wicked hearts, would assuredly have transgressed it, but with Him, that is God and man. God in creating man made him righteous, but man found out many inventions, and has gone far away from righteousness; where Adam failed, all we should have failed. He was our father, and carried us all away with him, and after his ways, we have all walked. Afterwards God chose out from among us one, who obtained this testimony, that the Lord knew him, that he would command his children and his household after him, that they should keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment, and with the descendants of this righteous man, God made the covenant of mount Sinai, and it was ordained through the agency of angels, by the hand of a mediator, even by the hand of Moses, the meekest of all men. But Israel, even from the days of Sinai, have

broken the covenant, transgressed the laws and forsaken the ways of God. Where they failed, all we should have failed, and we have proved it in every possible way. Blessed then be God, that the promise of the Spirit, the covenant under which we are entitled to the heavenly inheritance, is given to Him, is made with Him, who is not only the one and only Righteous, who is not only the Meek and Lowly one, but who is God over all, blessed for ever. This covenant is not through the disposition even of angels, but through the disposition of the Lord of angels; it is not committed into the hand of a mediator, who is merely man, but of One, who came down from heaven, one with the Father. Very God, who became one with us, very man. To Him is the Spirit given. He is the Heir of the eternal inheritance, of the kingdom of heaven. He is the King, who is the image of the invisible God, the First-born of every creature by whom all things consist, who is Head of the body the church, the Beginning, the First-born from the dead, in whom dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Yes, the covenant is not made with you, except as you are members of Him, that is the seed. It is made with you, because ye are all children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus. God by his prevenient Spirit hath given you to believe; believing ye have been baptized into Christ; baptized ye have put on Christ, and having put on Christ, ye are one in Him and heirs according to the promise.

Blessed then are your eyes, which see the things ye see. Behold the eternal life, which was with the Father,

hath been manifested unto you. And ye have known Him and have been received into fellowship with Him—for truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. Vain would it have been, if He had not received us into this blessed fellowship, for how should we have inherited eternal life, except we had loved the Lord our God with all our heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and our neighbour also as ourselves, and how should we have loved either God or man except He, who alone is love, had made us one with Himself, quickening us with His life, inspiring us by His Spirit of love. Go forth then, your hearts filled with love to Him, rejoicing in His goodness, triumphing in His praises, and seeking to manifest your love in your whole life and conversation, and in all your dealings with your fellow men.

O blessed Jesu, thou art the true Samaritan, who hast regarded man in his low estate, robbed of the robe of righteousness, with which in creation he was clothed, the image of God defaced with wounds and scars, life ebbing out, and death seizing his prey. Thou hast poured in the oil and wine of new and spiritual life and strength. Thou hast brought him within the temporary refuge of thine ordinances, providing all that is needful for the present, and thou returnest quickly to take him to everlasting habitations. In this, thy work of mercy, employ each one of us, and make us the fitting instruments of thy love in healing others as thou art healing us.

Gal. iii., 16-22; Luke x., 23-37.

“**G**O thou and do likewise.” This injunction contains the substance of our duty to our neighbour, in fact the substance of all our practical duties towards each other in this life. The first and great commandment is: thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul and mind, and the second is like unto it: thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. But we cannot show our love to God, except by showing our love to our neighbour. We cannot rightly fulfil the first and great commandment, unless we fulfil that second commandment which is like unto it, out of which it proceeds, from which it takes its origin. Love to God and love to our neighbour are correlatives; they proceed from one source, they have one common end; the latter serves as a proof of the truth and reality of the former. John writes in his first epistle, “If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen, and this commandment have we from Him, that he, who loveth God love his brother also;” and again, “herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is per-

fected in us." James also writes, " So speak ye and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty; for he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment. If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food and one of you say unto them : depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" The distinction between the blessed ones who inherit everlasting life in the kingdom of God, when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and the accursed who go into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels, consists in this, that the blessed know to show mercy. " I was an hungry and ye gave me meat, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye took me in, naked and ye clothed me; I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me. Inasmuch as ye have done this to one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The form, in which this same truth is set forth in the Gospel, is that of the man, who went down to Jericho and fell among the thieves, which stripped him of his raiment and wounded him and departed, leaving him half dead; and a priest came that way by chance, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side; and likewise a Levite came and looked on him and passed by on the other side; but a certain Samaritan, when he saw him, had compassion on him and came to him, and bound up his wounds and brought him to an inn, and took care of him, and gave him in charge to the host,

and said, take care of him and whatsoever thou spendest, when I come again I will repay thee. This was the act of one who loved his neighbour as himself; this was the act of one who knew how to show mercy, who had a heart to feel for those who are in distress, and a disposition to help, not merely by a passing feeling of sympathy, but an enduring disposition to relieve the sufferings of his fellows. He was the true neighbour of the man who fell among thieves.

We are all in the condition of the man who fell among thieves; we all need help from one another, for the world is corrupt, and its ways are corrupt, and fallen men are naturally like robbers ready to prey upon one another, ready to spoil one another. "Be merciful unto me, O God," says the inspired Psalmist, "be merciful unto me; my soul is among lions. I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows and their tongues a sharp sword." (Psalm lvii.) "Be merciful unto me," he says in another place (Psalm lvi.), "for man would swallow me up, he fighting daily oppresseth me." Such was the experience of Him, the righteous One, and such is the experience of all, who follow in His steps. Their continual cry is to be delivered from the men of this world; they know their own helplessness, and they are compassionate to others, they know their own need of mercy, and they learn from thence to show mercy. The fulfilling of the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is, as has been said, a proof of our keeping the first and greatest commandment, and a condition without

which we cannot fully observe the latter, of loving God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength. The life of the perfect Christian is a continual manifestation of his love to God, in his private closet, in his daily walk, in his words and works, in his daily waiting on the Lord in His house of prayer; in all these ways he shows his love to God. But all these higher duties are based upon one foundation, viz., the love, which God has shown towards us in Jesus Christ, in that He hath loved us, and hath sent His Son to redeem us from death, to deliver us from sin, to renew in us a right spirit. We might even go further, and say, that the value of these acts of mercy, which we show to our neighbour in visiting him in his affliction, depends upon the spirit in which they are done. Do we love God, because He has saved us from our sins, then we will be compassionate to those, who have fallen into sin. Do we realize our condition before God, unable to do any good thing in our own natural strength, by nature rebels against Him, resisting His will, notwithstanding all His efforts to bring us back, to reconcile us who were enemies through wicked works, then shall we be merciful to all, even to the unthankful and evil,—not proud and supercilious as the priest, who passed by on the other side; nor as the Levite, who looked on the wretched man, and went his way; not self-justifiers, as the Pharisees, who thank God, that they are not as other men; not hiding ourselves from our own flesh, but knowing our own condition, by nature robbed and spoiled, helpless and ready to perish, and knowing at

the same time, that God hath had mercy on us, and hath taken care of us, and will take care of us unto the end, and minded out of love to Him, who hath so cared for us, to show love also to our neighbour, minded to do justice and love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Gal. v., 16-24; Luke xvii., 11-19.

WE are endowed with life. God is the author of all life; we cannot create ourselves or any living thing; but we are responsible for the preservation of that life, and for its right use. This is true as regards our natural life; God gives it; we protect, provide for, and use it. This is equally true in regard to that spiritual, regenerate, and eternal life, of which we have been made partakers. God alone has *given* it. We could not give it to ourselves; it is by the act of God, irrespective of any will of ours. God has *given* it to us, but we are responsible for its preservation by the use of those means given for that end, and we are responsible likewise for the use of it, in the ways appointed by God for its exercise. We are redeemed, and we are regenerate, but as yet that regeneration has only taken place in *part*; we still bear about the body of humiliation, the body of corruption, the body of mortality. We have still a corrupt nature, Adam's nature, and we have divine life. Hence the flesh, the corrupt Adam-nature, ever lusteth against the Spirit, is ever seeking to rise, is ever calling for indulgence, is ever weighing us down to

earth and earthly weakness. Not until we throw off this body, not till we rise out of, or over-step death, will this struggle, this fight, this sore and wearisome warfare end. Blessed, thrice blessed, they who escape from it. Nevertheless, we are more than conquerors, for we are assured of victory, and this assurance is our strength. "If we live in the Spirit," or by the Spirit, (for this is our life), let us walk in the Spirit. Life is given for use, for exercise. Let us *walk*; the only way to overcome the flesh is by walking in the Spirit, and how can this be? it is by being "led by the Spirit." He is ever seeking to lead, to guide, to sanctify us; by the ordinances of God's house; by the body and blood of the ascended Lord; by the word of God, by His tender admonitions, and *inspirations*, He, the divine Giver of Life, seeks to lead us, and if we yield ourselves up in full assurance, and in entire renunciation of our self, He will lead us, and thus led, we resist and overcome the craving, yearning, lusting of the flesh for indulgence. Ah me! how do we check, and grieve, and quench the Spirit of God within us, by listening to the promptings and reasonings of our heart of flesh, instead of abandoning ourselves in *blind confidence* to the Holy Ghost. We think to take measures of security, simply because we try to walk by sight, and not by *blind* faith. It is the *reserve* of fear (that is distrust) that keeps us back, and so hinders us in our race. We judge as men, and not as those that are alive from the dead, not as those, who are delivered from earthly principles and earthly limitations.

We are redeemed, let us not forget it. We are sanctified, let us not ignore it by looking at ourselves, instead of at Him, in whom we are holy ; we are cleansed, let us give thanks. We lose much by not giving thanks for what we have. Let the song of joy and thanksgiving be in your hearts ; “ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.” There is no cure like thanksgiving to sorrow. There is no strength like joy and praise ; complaining, and mourning, and murmuring is *weakness*, the stronghold of Satan in our flesh. “ Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and such like, these are the footsteps by which the Spirit would lead us ; these exclude the motions of the flesh. Now we *can* walk in these, we can bring forth these, because we live by the Spirit ; the same Spirit, which has quickened us with life, giving us power to “ walk and please God.” Our hope is to throw off this coil, this earthly coil. Blessed are they, who do so ; yet would we be not unclothed, but clothed upon with our house, which is from heaven. And now when we see the day approaching, when many are the signs which encourage and increase our hope that that day is near ; now when another standard-bearer has entered into his rest,* the rather, let us be more encouraged to *expect*, and to *await* the appearing of our Lord, and our gathering unto Him. Let us seek the more to “ walk in the Spirit,” and be prepared for our God as soon as He shall appear.

* This homily was delivered shortly after the death of the pillar of evangelists.

Gal. v., 16-24; Luke xvii., 11-19.

NO one of any Christian experience but can confirm these words of the Epistle, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Conflicts of every kind are painful, whether in the family, in society, in the state, in nations; we have sad proofs before our eyes of the latter, and perhaps there are few, who have not tasted of the bitterness in one way or other. But the conflict *within* us, the conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, is the most painful of all. The lusting after evil things of whatever kind they be, with a conscience awake telling us, that if we indulge our desires, we are grieving the Spirit and offending against God. This is the painful strife, and how thankful should we be to any power, that would come to our help and deliver us. Let the word of God be the power, for His word has power, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Walk is a figurative expression as applied to spiritual things, but it implies a direct and progressive course. It conveys the idea of having set out on the way, in which we purposed to go. Well brethren and sisters, this is your position, or you would not be here to-day. You have set out on a spiritual course. Yea, through the grace and mercy of God, you were started upon it from your very infancy,

when your parents or friends brought you to the baptismal font, and our Lord Jesus Christ by His minister received you into His arms and blessed you, spake *death* to the flesh and *life* to the spirit, and put His mark, the cross, upon you, you were started on your spiritual walk. Who can estimate the grace given in baptism? The presence of the Lord to fulfil the act of His own ordaining, the faith and love of the church with open arms receiving the new gift, the gentle dove the Holy Ghost brooding over the offspring henceforth to be cherished by His abiding presence—who can measure the grace?

Then you for the most part have renewed your baptismal vows, have been sealed in the faith, which you have found grace to profess. There you are pursuing your walk, and will I trust pursue it till it leads you to glory. But how is this to be secured? “Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” This consists in abiding in, and continually cherishing a spirit of communion with Christ your Head in heaven; a daily, not to say hourly, looking to Him in the assurance that you are a member of His body, that He looks upon you as such and loves you as such, that He delights in your approaches to Him, the nearer and oftener, the more, that His watchful care over you ceases not by night or day, and that His joy of hope is to have you near Him face to face, that He may show you His glory,—what can the flesh, what can the world give you in exchange for this? This course of walking, it is plain, withdraws you from trusting in your own strength;

you especially, the young, beware of this. Walk humbly, for a haughty spirit goes before a fall, cherish association with those who truly fear and love God, put away from you at its first budding every thought of evil, look not upon any forbidden fruit, cherish *obedience* to those over you, in whatever state of life you are, for obedience is salvation. And walk faithfully and diligently in the ordinances of Christ's church. He has ordained them for your continual help and sustenance. Seek counsel of your pastors under every difficulty, and seek it as from the Lord in honesty of purpose and heart, and with fervent prayer. Pray always, in all time of trouble, in all time of ease and prosperity pray, enter into your closet and pour out your heart to your Heavenly Father through Christ Jesus. And our Father which seeth in secret will reward you openly. You shall see His hand working for and with you. Thus, my beloved, "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

Let us advert for a moment to the Gospel. The ten lepers were standing afar off and crying to be healed. "Go show yourselves to the priest," was the word. This was the ordained way of healing that disease. They obeyed, and as they went they were all healed. Oh the blessing of *obedience* to the word of the Lord! The *mercy* of the Lord was to all that cried to Him, no exception.

But how many returned to give thanks?

Only one of the ten—sad type of the condition of the world. The work of redemption accomplished by our Lord Jesus Christ embraces *all* men. Alas, how few

acknowledge it and turn to Him. Well, He is now gathering out the tenth, the tithe, the first-fruit. Help Him to do this work, be of the number prepared to His hand, His grace and mercy will not stop there. All men are forgiven, and, when they see the first portion taken away, many, many will return and give glory to God.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Gal. vi., 11; Matt. vi., 24.

THE words of our Lord were addressed to men in their natural condition, though brought into covenant with God. The epistles of the apostles were addressed to those, who through their word had believed, and through baptism had been made partakers of Christ. We find, however, from the words and arguments employed by our Lord in the Gospel, and by Paul in the Epistle for this day, that in both these classes of men there are the same evils to be combated and the same lessons are necessary. Strange—passing strange—that so it should be. Is it not strange, that anyone should conceive the possibility of serving God, and yet serving mammon? Is it not still more strange, that men should occupy their whole lives in this double service? Most strange of all, that they who are baptized into Christ should thus relapse. You profess, O man, to be the servant of God, to have accepted His wages, to be of His household, His servant, of His family who created all, who provides for all, who gives to all food its virtue; He will give you abundant occupation—every class of work, calling into exercise

your powers of body or of mind, will He give you to do, in the world and in His more immediate service, in science, in art, in handiwork ; and He will take care that you receive a due reward, sufficient to sustain in life both yourself and all, who are dependent on you. And yet you will not rest satisfied ; you will not be content with doing His work ; you will not trust Him to feed and clothe you ; you will fret yourself with vain apprehensions, that your means will fail you. If you have set your mind upon some good object—something truly good for you—either for your own welfare in this world, or for the advancement of God's service, you cannot trust God to bring it to pass, but *you* must do this, or that, or the other, of your *own* thought and your own mind. And if it so happen that you are prospered, and increased in this world's goods, in wealth, in reputation, then forsooth you must do this or that in order to maintain your position ; or it may be in order to maintain God and God's cause in the good position into which, *through you*, it has been brought, and for the retaining of which, God and His cause must, to some degree, be dependent on you.

Observe, my brethren, that I am supposing no extreme case. I have not spoken of those, who strive to live luxuriously, while yet professing religion ; who strive to make things safe hereafter, while they live as they like here. I am supposing the case of him that professes to depend on God, and yet is lost in all the cares and anxieties and burdens of one dependent on himself. And so mammon secures his portion in the

service and worship of his votary, and the kingdom is seen only at the end of this world's vista, and is not the one object on which the eye is fixed, and from which the attention cannot be diverted.

Brethren, God raises up apostles, that they may bring before you the kingdom of heaven ; remind you evermore, whosoever of you are in Christ, that you are part and parcel of the new creation ; that your special calling is not to seek to found or to advance a kingdom upon earth. No doubt you ought gladly to aid your brethren in the world in all things, which pertain to their well-being in mind and in body ; yet your special vocation is not to make man an improved creature of this earth, but to wait for the Lord from heaven, to rouse up your fellow Christians, that they also may be prepared to meet Him, for only when He comes can they that remain on earth be really bettered. And when He comes, they, that are baptized into Him, are to be assumed into the heavenly glory, and to be like unto Him in all respects, and to be with Him, where He will be seated on the throne of the world.

And to you who are thus created anew in Christ Jesus, to you the words of the Lord come with overwhelming force, ye *cannot* serve God and mammon. Ye are crucified, dead, and buried with Christ. *Seek* the kingdom of heaven ! God has translated you into the kingdom of His dear Son. Ye are seated with Him in heavenly places. God has sent apostles to you, that ye may be *filled* with the Holy Ghost ; and that, perfected by the heavenly ministries, ye may abide in

the new creation. Therefore salute no man by the way, we have a work to do; how are we straitened until it be accomplished! We are engaged in hastening the kingdom of the risen Lord. Our hearts are occupied in the coming glory of the resurrection. Henceforth let no man trouble us. We are dead and risen again; we bear in our body the brand of our Lord, the marks of the Crucified One. Thus shall peace and mercy rest upon us and upon the Israel of God. Thus shall the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with our spirits.

Gal. vi., II; Matt. vi., 24.

“**T**AKE no thought for your life.”

1st.—The words “take no thought for your life” do not convey to us in the present day the meaning of our Lord’s words as recorded by Matthew. Our Lord did not forbid His disciples absolutely to take proper thought about the things of this life, but He forbade them to allow the mind so to be fixed on such things—in other words, so to think of them as to be careful and anxious about them. The full meaning of the passage is this: He forbade His disciples to think of the things of this life as though they were slaves of mammon; rather they were to regard themselves as servants of God.

2nd.—He that is the slave of mammon is naturally and necessarily anxious about the things of this life. What he shall eat, what he shall drink, wherewith he

shall be clothed, how he may lay up much goods for many years. This is the work which mammon gives him to do, and the reward which mammon sometimes bestows on him is to enable him for a little hour to congratulate himself and to say, “Soul take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” And then suddenly all these things pass away. He that is the servant of God sets his heart upon God and His righteousness, and God satisfies his desire, gives the blessed enjoyment of Himself, and the gift of His righteousness, and besides adds to him all those things that are necessary for this life.

3rd.—We are to think of *these* things, then, as the necessary provision, which God gives to enable us to fulfil our duty and service to Himself while we remain here. Our labour for the necessary support of this life is to be counted as part of the service of God. He assigns to us our proper place in the world, and our duty therein is to be fulfilled in obedience to Him, and in honour of Him, and not for the promotion of our own interests, or our own selfish and individual gratification.

4th.—There are two distinct precepts in the Gospel for this day. Our Lord instructs His disciples negatively that they are not to be careful about the things of this life; positively, that they are to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness—to have our hearts set upon the kingdom of everlasting life, and upon the righteousness of the new Creature, the risen One, which can alone avail anything with God. This is the only means, whereby we can cease from undue and soul-devouring care for the things of this life.

If such was the word of the Lord to His disciples in the days of His mortal flesh, when He had not yet risen for effectuating our righteousness, with how much greater force does it come to us, who since His resurrection have, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, been actually translated into the kingdom of eternal life, and have actually received the gift of righteousness in Christ. In one sense, indeed, we are still in the state of discipleship; we have still to seek the kingdom and righteousness of God; we are yet in mortal flesh, exposed to its temptations and desires, but in another sense we have attained the objects, which in mortal flesh we seek, for are we not in Christ Jesus a new creature? How can we set our hearts on this world, unto whom, through Christ, the world is crucified, and we unto the world? How can we glory in the flesh who are glorying in the cross of Christ, whereon the flesh was destroyed? How can we be anxious for our natural life, who are dead through the crucifixion of Christ, yea, buried with Him, yea, risen up with Him in newness of life, and seated with Him in heavenly places, having part in that new creation, which sprang up from the seed of His crucified body and emerged from the grave in which it was sown, clothed with glory and immortality—the fulness of the Godhead bodily—the fulness of Him that filleth all in all? Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. Ye fathers that have known Him, that is from the beginning and who abides for ever, how can ye set your hearts on these

fleeting perishable riches? Ye young men, who are in Him that is strong, in Him that overcometh, how is it possible, that ye should suffer yourselves to be carried away by vanity and folly, and submit to be brought into subjection by the enemy? Ye little children, who are new created in Him that is the only Begotten, ye cannot but live in the new life of which ye are made partakers. Fathers, young men, and little children, how can ye be solicitous for this life—what ye shall eat or drink, or what ye shall put on? for whosoever is baptized into Christ has put on Christ, and all that hunger and thirst after righteousness He invites to His table, and there He feeds them with that bread of life, that food of immortality, which whoso eats shall never hunger, and he that drinks shall never thirst. Labour not then for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man gives you, for Him hath God the Father sealed.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Eph. iii., 13; Luke vii., 11-17.

WHAT is the church? It is not an earthly, worldly, political establishment. It is not merely a divine institution. The former of these definitions is false, the latter imperfect. The church is not of, or belonging to, this earth. That she has anything to do with the earth is a mere *accident*. She *has* to do with it, because some who form her component parts are for a *time* on the earth; but this earthly element will fall off, and when it shall fall off the church will appear in her true character and standing. What is the church? I answer, It is a *heavenly thing*. It does not belong to this world. Her head is in *heaven*. Her life is in *heaven*. Her laws are the laws of the kingdom of the *heavens*. She is seated in *heavenly places*. Her sphere is the kingdom of the *heavens*. The food she eats is from *heaven*. In a word, she is *heavenly*, not earthly. Her true place is beside her Lord in *heavenly places*, and when the time appointed arrives, her earthly element, her temporary connection with earth (as it is now), drops off for ever. The church is a *heavenly thing*, a new creation. Men partaking of the life of the risen Son of God—risen out

of death—that is the church. When the Holy Ghost came down as a rushing mighty wind, and filled the house, *then* began the new creation of God, the *heavenly* thing. This it was that apostles at the beginning laboured to keep the church mindful of, viz., that she was *heavenly*; but they failed. The church fell from grace, turned to beggarly elements, ceased to long for, and to be with, her Lord; took up with the earthly element, sought protection from earthly powers, received honour from man, soon forgot her calling. At the very beginning the church ceased to remember she was *heavenly*, and so apostles died out, and of *necessity*, a church not recognizing herself as a heavenly thing *could* not, and *would* not, retain apostleship. And a church only recognizing herself as an earthly thing, or an institution of divine appointment, cannot desire, cannot receive, apostles. Apostleship is the first link of the chain which unites (ministerially considered) Christ to His body, the church; and the function, the special function, of that office is to minister the Holy Ghost, not in the form of, or unto, regenerate life, for baptism (which is the ordinance for that) is not the speciality of apostles, but to administer the Holy Ghost for the perfecting, harmonization and energizing of the body. This is the work of the body. This is the work of apostleship. But a church failing to know herself as *heavenly* cannot desire this; she can see no good in it; she can neither retain nor desire it. And so doctrine becomes a matter of intellect—the source of strife—holiness in flesh an impossibility—the “powers of the world to come” un-

known or despised—the dead forgotten, as though they did not belong to the *same* body, and the absence of her Lord neither felt nor regretted. Such is the church ceasing to know that she is *heavenly*. Now then, my beloved brethren, if God has prevailed to restore the office of apostles, it is the sure sign and token, that He is raising up in His church the knowledge and belief of her being heavenly. Be ye fellow-workers together with God, cease from the earthly, see only the heavenly element. Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Ye *are* seated in heavenly places. Remember, the body of Christ (like Christ) is not of this world. Remember your high calling, cease from all strivings to do God's work, save after God's own way. Carry about with you the recollection of the church as a heavenly thing, in regard to your brethren, who see not yet as you see. Be not covetous to bring them to your party, leave it to God to raise up in them the knowledge of what they are, what the body of Christ is. Take heed that ye do not in some measure put a distinction between yourselves and them, there is *one, one body*, and the faith, the life, the knowledge, which wells up in you, has its fountain spring in the body. See that neither in thought nor spirit you separate yourselves from your brethren, or think yourselves better than they. It is by seeing the church as a *heavenly thing*, as not of this earth, that we get rid of our sectarianism, our love of strife and division. Why are Roman, and Greek, and Lutheran, and Anglican Christians divided? Simply because they see, they look at the *earthly* element.

They see each other as men, they know each the other after the flesh, not after the risen Christ. Now henceforth know no man after the flesh, but know all men in Christ; only see the one body, the heavenly thing; and leave to God the way and the mode by which He will cause the invigorated life (which He has in part given you to know) to permeate the whole body. So likewise in regard to the dead in Christ. Think you, that they are in any measure whatever separated from or deprived of the communion of saints? then are you looking at the earthly, not at the heavenly. True it is they have lost that earthly and sacramental constitution in which they were wont, and you are wont, to receive the grace of Christ, but are they the less members of the one body, or less partakers of the one same life, or do they wait the less in the same hope. No, the dead in Christ, rise *first*, even before the living are changed; and it is written, that He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall quicken your mortal bodies by His spirit that dwelleth in you. Why have the dead been forgotten? only because the church has ceased to be regarded as *heavenly*. The cruel, wicked doctrine of purgatory, the heartless forgetfulness of Protestantism, could have found no place in a church that knew she was heavenly, not earthly. A church seated in heavenly places would know, that the dropping off of the earthly vesture could not affect the membership of the one heavenly body. Again, to wait for, to expect the Lord is the church's hope, she has not *expected*, she has not *waited*, she has not *desired* His appearing; how could she? ceasing to

abide in the heavenlies, taken up with earth, and earthly protection, ceasing to know herself hid with Christ in God, how could she feel His absence? It was enough for her to know that He had passed into the heavens, and there made intercession for her. Only as we recognize, and realize our *heavenly* standing, can we truly, earnestly look out for His coming. A church filled with the knowledge of her being *heavenly*, cannot rest, or cease to cry, "Come, come, come, Lord Jesus;" the Spirit and the bride say come. No argument can make men look for His coming, in vain will you try to persuade men that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, they have reason on their side, when they say, where is the promise of His coming? all things continue as the were from the beginning of the creation. The world advances, and men make progress, evils are ameliorated, blessings abound and increase; the world cries, and must cry, "Peace and safety." The church, sitting in heavenly places, *expects* Him *every hour*, and says, "Why delayeth He His coming, why tarry the wheels of His chariot?" None can really expect and wait daily for Christ but those who know the church is *heavenly*. The raising up this faith in His church is the *sure guarantee* of His approach. Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down; strengthen the feeble knees; hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Be not weary in well-doing. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we *have* a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

For this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Long for this, long not for your death (a foolish, selfish thought), but long for the day, when the church shall put off this earthly condition, and put on her true, her eternal house which is from heaven. And now, when you come to the table of the Lord, to eat heavenly food, the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, receive with joy and thanksgiving the bread of God, the bread which came down from heaven, and giveth life. Your life is *hid* with Christ in God. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." May you be able, *with all saints*, to comprehend the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.

Eph. iii., 13; Luke vii., 11.

A WOMAN, when she marries, gives up the fostering care and protection of father, and mother, and brother; she casts herself upon her husband and clings only to him, he is her only earthly stay. Bereft of her husband, that stay is gone—she is left desolate and forlorn. Nevertheless, if God in His mercy has given to her a son, to him she turns, to him she clings. There is still some interest and hope for her on earth, and while he survives she seems to see in him, in some sort, father, brother, and husband survive. Alas! if he is

taken away, all her former wounds re-open, and the life of hope dies out. In losing him she loses all again. The sight of a widow bereft of her only son rouses all our interest, and awakens all our sympathy.

And He, who knows the hearts of all men—He, who made Himself one with us, that He might participate in all our sorrows and lift us up out of them all—He sympathized in the dark and desolate sorrow, which filled this widow's heart ; when He saw her He had compassion on her, and in the fervency of love, and the consciousness of present power, He said to her, Weep not ; He came and touched the bier ; and they that bare it, conscious also of the present God, though they knew Him not, stood still—and with a word He raised the dead, and restored him to his mother.

Yes ; Jesus honours, and has tender compassion on the widowed and the child-bereft. He despises not the sighing of the contrite, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful. And therefore, when He was about to leave His disciples, who, in His absence, were to be as a widow bereaved of her only child, He left with them His peace—giving them the promise of the Comforter, whom He would send unto them from the Father, and in whom He would come and dwell with them in spirit, filling their widowed hearts with hope of that day, when in body also He would come again, and then their heart should rejoice, and their joy no man should take from them.

And this promise He fulfilled—He sent down the Holy Ghost upon the apostles, and by the laying on of their hands He communicated the same Holy Ghost to all who

believed on Him through their word, making them all to be one. As the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, so in the same Holy Ghost they were made one in the Father and in the Son.

For, when God raised Jesus Christ our Lord from the dead, and exalted Him to His own right hand, He gave to Him the eternal promise, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Christ. Christ sendeth His apostles to minister the Holy Ghost, not only through all the sacraments dispensed by all those other ministers, whom they associate with themselves by ordination—each sacrament having its proper efficacy and object—but through the laying on of their hands for this specific object, that the saints may be thoroughly furnished through the descent and abiding presence of the Holy Ghost. Thus are the saints builded into Christ. And the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord—a habitation of God through the Spirit.

Such being the object and efficacy of the ministry of apostles, for this cause they bow their knees unto the Father, the source and origin of all fatherhood in heaven and in earth, that all that has been bestowed through their instrumentality in the gift of the Holy Ghost may be carried out into its full proportions. Oh what riches of glory are contained in the gift of Holy Ghost! How should the spirit advance from step to step, from one degree of consciousness of all that hath been bestowed unto another! What perseverance is needed in the inner man for this blessed progress—that we may go

from strength to strength, until we appear before God in Zion. How in our progress ought we to grow and increase in our assurance, that Christ Himself dwells in our hearts ! How ought we to know Him more and more, perceive His exceeding loveliness, His goodness, His truth, and grow in the comprehension of the full extent and largeness of His love to us—that love which hath encompassed our whole being, and shall encompass it to all eternity—which hath been, and is, and shall be, before us, and beside us, and above us, and beneath us—and lastly, which abideth in us, filling us with all the fulness of God !

Such was the blessedness of the church in those first days, when though her Lord was absent, yet through His apostles He comforted and sustained her. And surely when those apostles were removed, if her heart had been as the heart of a widow bereaved of her only son, the Lord would long since have had compassion on her, and restored to her her son. But forgetting her absent Lord, and seeking not the heavenly things, but an earthly inheritance, she hath said, “ I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow ; ” therefore spiritual desolation hath come upon her to the uttermost. But, dearly beloved, through our lips she saith such words no more ; through our lips she confesses her misery and her destitution ; she cries out, “ Behold, O Lord, the desolations of Thy sanctuary, establish our judges as at the first, and our counsellors as at the beginning. Pour out Thy Spirit as floods on the dry ground, and refresh with a gracious rain Thy weary

heritage." Therefore will God hear her, therefore He hath heard her; a nation shall be born to her in a day; and she shall remember the reproach of her widowhood no more. Thy Maker is thy husband. The Lord of Hosts is His name. And as a bridegroom rejoiceth over his bride, so the Lord thy God shall rejoice over thee.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Eph. iv., 1-6; Luke xiv., 1-II.

THREE are two evils equally to be avoided. One is, a man thrusting himself into a place, which God has not bidden Him to take. The other is, not filling the place which God *has* bidden him to take. Much mischief is done in the church and in the world, by the first, but more evil is done in both by the second.

To prepare oneself for the place, which God may give us in the family, in the world, in the state, in the church, and then to fill that place exactly, neither coming short of it, nor going beyond it, is indeed our duty, and a difficult duty to perform. To keep our respective places, not allowing any man to interfere with, or prevent us, and yet not to be puffed up, nor proud, but with all humility and lowliness of mind and spirit towards God and to men, to fulfil its duties; and not to seek to interfere with, or to put one's self in another man's place; this is the difficult task we have to perform, and because of the transgression against this duty, Christendom is filled with misery, injury, and confusion.

If every bishop, priest, and deacon had simply filled his place in the church, and not come short in it, nor

gone beyond it to interfere with “other men’s bishoprics” (1 Peter iv., 15), nor with kings in their places; and if every king had fulfilled his duty in his place, and not gone beyond it to interfere with the bishoprics in the church; if every noble and man of estate, and every father, and every master had filled his place in all meekness and humility; if every baptized man realized his calling, to sit down at the table of the Lord, now and in the kingdom, how different would the condition of the church, of the nations, of the families, be this day to that in which we see them!

The Epistle and the Gospel go together. Do not take a place, which the Lord has *not* put you in. Set yourself in the place He *does* give you, not counting yourself unfit for it, but taking it *because* He bids you, and fulfil its duties with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

Self-respect and dignity are not pride. Self-respect is very different from self-esteem, and dignity from haughtiness. Self-respect and Christian dignity are perfectly compatible with meekness, gentleness, humility, long-suffering, and forbearance. The *purple* is one of the colours of the tabernacle, which a man must be endued with, if he would form part of the tabernacle, the dwelling place of God; and it is perfectly compatible with the *white*, the emblem of meekness and humility, as well as of purity and righteousness—the lily of the valley. When a man is making a fool of himself, or demeaning himself unworthily in the eyes of others, he is not wearing the purple. If he is

haughty, irritable, impatient, puffed up and proud, he is not wearing the white.

Let us seek then to profit by this line of meditation to-day. Brethren, it is difficult for those in the ministry to believe, that they really are set by God in the places of apostle, prophet, evangelist, and pastor; in the places of angel, priest and deacon. It is difficult for the young to realize, that they are acolytes in the house and at the altar of God. It is difficult for you really to believe that you are God's baptized people, His children, His elect; and that He has set you to eat at His table for ever. And it is difficult, very difficult, to deport ourselves, each in our place, according to the dignity of that place, whether among the ministers, or among the people of the Most High; and yet with such lowness, such gentle courtesy, meekness, such forbearing with one another, as becometh those, who know that they are in themselves most unfit and most unworthy to take the lowest place in God's house, and the lowest seat at His table. Therefore let us turn to Him, who was the most lowly, the most meek, the most forbearing of all men—and yet with whom no man ever ventured to take a liberty—that we may, in our poor measure, receive out of His fulness, grace to enable us to deport ourselves aright in every position in life, in which He has been pleased to place us. Then we will take the lowest room. Although He has gathered us out, and made us what we are, and invited us to this feast, yet will we take the lowest room, and confess how unworthy we are to be here, and how many more worthy than we might have

been in this place, in this house this day, only that He has bid us to come.

Eph. iv., 1-6 ; Luke xxiv., 1-11.

MANY of the maxims contained in the words of the Lord go straight to the heart of the natural man, command his consent, and find a response in his conscience. They are addressed to men living in civil society, in families, and in nations. They are the principles which are essential to the well-being of men in these relations, and, if universally obeyed, all would be moral happiness and peace—even in this fallen world of ours.

Others of the words of our Lord contain maxims, which are hard to the natural man, which belong to a righteousness far surpassing the righteousness of which the natural man can have any conception, and belonging to that righteousness which is the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. These are maxims, which can only be appreciated or practised by the spiritual man—they are addressed to *him*—even to that condition of the inner man, which exists when Christ is formed in him. And although spoken by our Lord in the ears of natural men, they apply to that blessed state of things, which He was to introduce through His death and resurrection and by the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Such are the lessons of meekness and forbearance, of

self-denial and humility, contained in the Gospel and enforced in the Epistle, enforced on that only ground on which they become possible to fallen men.

We are taught not to seek our own things, or claim anything as our own, but to be content to receive all things from the great Head of the family in heaven and in earth. To grasp after things, which are not our own, to claim riches or honours, which do not properly belong to us, is contrary to the rule of righteousness, and is condemned by the natural conscience. But to know our own lawful rights, and yet to forbear to vindicate them, or even lay claim to them, beyond what the interests of society require of us—not merely to submit, but to be content with less than is our own—content, because satisfied that our heavenly Father dispenses and governs all—these are Christian graces—fruits of the Spirit.

The scope of the apostle's argument is this. If we would walk worthy of our vocation, we must walk with all lowliness and meekness, long-suffering and mutual forbearance in love. Again, if we would practise these heavenly graces, we must give all diligence to seek the unity of the Spirit in the common bond of peace. But how can you, a mortal feeble creature, keep the oneness or unity of the Spirit of God? Ask yourselves that question. It is absurd to suppose, that the question refers merely to your own spirit—the spirit of an individual man—you cannot *but* keep its oneness. It is in the actings of your own spirit, that you can alone keep the oneness of the Holy Ghost. And how are you to do

that? How can anything that you do affect the oneness of the Spirit of God? The apostle gives you the explanation. As you are composed of matter and spirit, one natural human body and one natural human spirit, so in that of which the apostle is speaking there is also one body and one Spirit. One body, consisting of many individual men, incorporated into Christ, our risen Lord. One Spirit, the Spirit of Christ our risen Lord, the Holy Ghost, who dwells in Christ's body, and therefore dwells through and in every individual member, part or particle of that body, that is, dwells in every individual man so incorporated into Christ. And how can it be otherwise? for, saith the apostle, you are called in one hope of your calling—your calling is *to the inheritance*—to be heirs and possessors with Christ, of God Himself, God Himself by the Holy Ghost, however incredible in its mere statement, however incomprehensible when we seek to weigh the exact *meaning* of these words—this, and nothing less than this, is it to which God has called us.

Well, though *joint-heirs with* Christ, yet only *in* Christ can we attain this calling. He is the Heir; He is the King. Unto Him, and only to Him, hath the Father committed all things in heaven and earth. And therefore our hope is no individual hope, to be realized to one individual without any reference to another—it is a hope, which can only be realized by Christ, in *whom*, and by His one body in *which*, dwells the one Spirit. Our hope is only, and can be only, the hope of the one body, indwelt by the one Spirit; many members, one Christ.

It is founded in *One*. *One Lord*, the only-begotten Son of the Father, who became man, and after death was declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection. One faith, the gospel of this grace, preached in all the world, and believed on by God's elect, whose hearts He turned to Him. One baptism—only in Christ can this hope be attained, and only those who are baptized into Him can be in Him. One God and Father of all—for all of us He made—who is *upon* all, for He it is, who laid His hand on each of us, who are in Christ; and *through* all, for in every stage of the process from creation or birth, or new birth, to the complete inheritance, His all-efficient will hath directed and governed all. And *in* all, for as He is in the Son and the Son is in Him, so is He in all that are baptized into the Son, and indwelt of and sealed by the Holy Ghost. Oh heavenly logic, divine argument this day addressed to us! This being our lot, and this our inheritance, let us walk worthy of it, in lowliness and meekness, in long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

ALL ANGELS.

Rev. xii., 7-12; Matt. xviii., 1-10.

RAISED up together with Jesus, and sitting with Him in heavenly places, we keep holy feast unto the Lord—though on the earth, yet with our Saviour in heaven—though in mortal bodies of sin and death, yet the temple of the Holy Ghost. Therefore we celebrate that wondrous presence of angels and archangels, which surround the throne and go forth among the heirs of salvation.

We have adored the Lamb for the work of incarnation, for His sufferings, death and resurrection, for His gift of the Holy Ghost. And not less will we adore Him this day for making known unto man the Father's eternal purpose in the order of the heavenly angels.

And we do adore Him. It is no sham. It may be weak, it may be the lispings of childhood. But it is real. It is a good work begun, and ere long to be perfected. For the adoration He is now receiving is the act of the church, in the attitude of going forth to meet Him the second time. It is no more a worship of tarrying upon the earth, or lingering after earthly hopes. It is an

active worship of the church upon the march, turning neither to the right nor to the left, not staying to keep her feasts, but keeping her feasts with girded loins and burning lamps. Not making them excuses for remaining here, but using them as steps forward to the desire of her soul, even Jesus Christ. And so it is with the festival of All Angels. She has gotten a glimpse of the coming glory of Jesus, and on her way she has the company of angels, but she lingers not to wonder at them, but she saith, as it were, "Carry me on until I meet the Lord Jesus." And well may we hear, as it were, the angels responding "For this indeed are we sent." Surely we are about to enter the kingdom. We have seen the gate of heaven. We have the open door. And lo ! the ladder into it is set.

Oh ! how dreadful is the house of God. Jesus saith, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter in." And herein is the proof that we are entering in, for behold the church is again a child, and her members little children, for again she is following the fathers, whom the Lord hath set to lead her. The idea of little children is incomplete without the idea of fathers. It is fathers whom little children follow and cleave unto. There can be no development of little children without the presence of fathers. It is when fathers are present that little children spring up, who follow (in their hand) the Lamb wherever He leads. So the church, following apostles again, has come into the privilege of those "little ones," who shall know the ministry of angels around the heirs of salvation. Our

heart burns within us as we meditate of this glorious position, for which at present we ask no proof, save the one before our eyes this day, that apostles have given this feast, and the church followeth her fathers.

Jesus speaks in the Gospel of the woes, that shall rest upon those who offend one of these little ones, and warns all offenders that there are angels who excel in strength, that are ever watching the face of God, and ready to fly forth at a moment's warning to give battle and defeat to the legions of evil spirits, who are now offending the children of God. Evil spirits who are roused in these latter days, because the church is become again a child, and passed away from all spirit of judgment and accusation—evil spirits, who are roused, because at the altar of the Christian church is heard the loving voice of helpless little ones, and seen the reverend worship of children pleading for a backsliding mother. My dearly beloved, it is the evil spirits that are causing many of the troubles that toss and afflict you. Such a commotion do they make in the spiritual regions ! Such a confusion and strife, and every evil work ! They seem well nigh to prevail.

Fear not, little flock ; Michael and his angels come forth from beholding the face of your Father ; they have received a charge concerning you, and will not leave you, until they have done their part to cast down the accuser of the brethren, and carry you safely into the bosom of your God, for they excel in strength. But the church is reaping her reward of looking steadfastly unto the Lamb of God, for it is the eye of those, that never cease

to behold the Lamb, that shall experience the power of that word, which declares that angels always behold that face.

Fall down now and adore Him, who, receiving the worship of those heavenly beings (Collect), finds them fitting instruments to minister unto the help and honour of His bride. Draw nearer and nearer unto Him, feeding on His precious sacrifice, that, being one with the Lord of angels, you may more and more receive their holy ministry to bear you up in all your conflict.

Rev. xii., 7-12; Matt. xviii., 1-10.

THE Holy Ghost inspires the church this day to commemorate the holy angels, and in worshipping God to give Him thanks for the ministry of these blessed beings in heaven before His face, and on earth among the children of men. In obeying these divine motions of the Spirit of God, let us meditate on God's goodness. 1st. That He has been pleased to form such holy and beneficent creatures. 2nd. That He has been pleased to appoint them to be our guardians and our representatives. 3rd. That especially He hath appointed them to wait upon and minister to them, that are to be heirs of salvation. 4th. That He purposes by them to effect a work of victory and expurgation even of heaven itself. All these several things being clearly revealed in God's holy word, the blessed Spirit has brought them to our

remembrance, and leads us this day to commemorate and rejoice in them. When the state of human society is wild and unsophisticated, the work of Satan is to lead men to the worship of *idols*, the work of their *hands*. As man emerges into civilization and his mind is more occupied with generalization and philosophy, Satan's great device is to lead him into spiritual mysticism, to induce him to consider religion as a matter merely of spiritual influences, good or bad, and to extinguish all apprehensions of God or of spirits, good or bad, as personal beings. The speculations of their own minds are now their idols. Thus, too often, the Holy Ghost has only in name been recognized as a person. He has been regarded practically as the good influence or principle, just as Satan, the prince of devils, has been regarded as the evil principle. And angels, or spiritual beings, whether good or evil, even when in word acknowledged, have been too often presented to the minds of Christian people, or regarded in their faith, not as creatures really existing, but as imaginative representations of the various intangible influences which affect human actions or feelings. But now God has revived our faith in His Spirit as a person—Very God—distinct, though indissoluble from the Father and the Son in the one Godhead, who, although He be the great gift and promise of God to man, and the endowment of the Christ of God, doth dwell personally in the man Christ Jesus, and in all the members of His mystical body. He has also revived our faith in the distinct existence of the holy angels, enabling us to understand the literal truth of those

narratives of the doings and missions of individual angels, given in the Old Testament and in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles. He has shown us that they are true individual creatures, for He has told us that our blessed Saviour Himself was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. And that having died, He hath been exalted to the right hand of glory, angels, and principalities, and powers, being now made subject unto Him. The holy angels then, we see, in relation to man earthly and mortal, are higher in order and dignity. But man was created with yet higher destinies, and raised in immortality and glory, he is exalted *above* the heavenly host.

Believing therefore in the existence of the holy angels, we are able, secondly, to apprehend and rejoice in the knowledge conveyed to us in the Gospel, that while we are in these mortal bodies on earth, the blessed angels concern themselves with our interests, and appear for us as our representatives before our Father in heaven. This is a privilege from which even the youngest infant is not excluded, and until we altogether forsake our God, our angels are ever before the throne, ready to receive the missions of mercy and providential care upon which God sends them forth for our protection or deliverance.

But in the third place, for His elect, whom He hath chosen in the Son of His love, and whom He fore-ordains to be heirs of the eternal inheritance : for them His angels have a *special* mission, and are sent forth to exercise a *special* care. These are liturgical spirits, as the apostle calls them in the Epistle to the Hebrews ; those ministers

or liturgists of His, that do His pleasure, as the psalmist says, who are sent forth not merely to preserve them that are regenerate, from bodily dangers, but to comfort and nourish their spirits in preparation for that glorious destiny, to which they shall attain, when they shall be revealed as priests and kings, and shall reign with Christ their Lord and Head.

And lastly, we are shown that these mighty beings have their special work in that final conflict, which is to precede the kingdom of our Lord. We have even now our spiritual conflict—the conflict, in which the Lord is present with us to enable us to endure, wrestling against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness. The Lord carries on that conflict in the spirit of each one of us, and except we apostatize from Him, He will subdue all things in us unto Himself, every proud look, and high thought, and imagination ; God will make us more than conquerors in and through Christ. But there is also a conflict to be carried on in those very heavens, which are the abode of the blessed angels. Thither hath Satan of a long time intruded himself ! Thence must he be expelled ! And He, that forbore to call upon those legions of angels which were at His bidding, when He voluntarily submitted Himself for us to the malice of wicked men, shall then put forth in array those heavenly hosts, by whom He shall cast out Satan and his angels, and extirpate them for ever from heaven, thus preparing the promised inheritance for all, who shall have part in the first resurrection.

Brethren, we have either not thought aright, or we

have thought far too little concerning the holy angels. Either they have been superstitiously worshipped, or their existence has been denied or ignored. Let us thank God, that He has made such blessed beings. Let us thank Him for the services, which at His bidding they render to us. Let us thank Him for their guardianship and fostering care. Our disregard of them can only proceed from want of faith or want of gratitude. On the other hand, our grateful regard for them will lead us upwards to Him, who is the Author of all our benefits, the God and Father of angels, the God and Father of mankind.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

I Cor. i., 4-8; Matt. xxii., 34.

WHOEVER has known what it is to love another, and I suppose that every human being, however degraded, has at some time or other been conscious of that highest and most noble affection, will on the slightest reflection be able to distinguish between love and mere attachment. We can become attached to a place, to a thing without life, to an animal ; so much so, as to prostitute the name of love to our enjoyment of its possession or use ; but we can only love a person, we can only love one with whom we have communion, which must be based on mutual sympathies and affections, and on the consciousness that we have them. Love is a spiritual affection, arising from the attraction of those same spiritual sympathies and affections. It is above reason, and reason cannot give any account of it, although by reason we are bound to regulate our thoughts and actions, our minds and bodies, when influenced by love ; as well as by any other passion. And so, before we can love God, we must have a personal knowledge of Him, knowledge of Him as a person, and so far as our knowledge of Him extends, must also delight in those things in which He delights, and abhor

what He abhors. Always remembering that love is something far higher than sympathy. It is communion of spirit with spirit, and, we speak it with all humility, adoration and wonder at God's infinite condescension, with mutual surrender.

God, when He created us, made us spiritual beings in material bodies, persons capable of being the objects of His love, and of loving Him. He created Adam upright ; and creating him upright, the Lord God loved Adam, and walked with him, and Adam loved God and walked with God. And now that through sin we have fallen, we still retain all the spiritual capacities in the exercise of which we may recognize God and love Him ; but alas, in our natural state the darkness of night has fallen upon our spiritual vision, and our hearts are alienated from God. We know Him not, and love Him not, we naturally seek to escape from Him, although in our spirits there is the consciousness of a vast void and of an all unsatisfied want, and our conscience tells us that we are ourselves the cause of it.

Oh what a loving and merciful God ! how long-suffering and gracious is our God ! who from all eternity hath ordained His Son to be the true life and light of men, the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and through the midst of the darkness of their hearts casts the ray of light, which still keeps alive some glimmering idea of God and goodness. And thus through the ages of darkness He has continually followed us with His love, moving us to believe in Him and to love Him, and though with faltering steps, to

walk with Him. Thus did He raise up Enoch, and Noah, and Shem, and Abraham, blessed beacons in the night to warn and guide, but soon again passing and lost from the view of men. Then he took a larger measure, and by His law He held up the mirror in the face of men, revealing Himself to be righteous and yet merciful, teaching man *how* he *ought* to love God, convincing man that he *cannot* love God, and so as by a schoolmaster, educating us and leading us to Christ.

At length Christ came, the Revealer of the Father, in whom we not only know God, but are brought most near to Him, becoming His children, and He our Father by new creation.

And now, O ye who are in Christ, having reminded you how impossible it is, that fallen man should love God, let me remind you how impossible it is, that ye should not love God. Not only have ye in the heart of Christ every tender sympathy, and thought, and affection set in the same direction with the mind of God, but in the gift and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the Father and the Son come down to you and take up their abode in you, revealing themselves in all the fulness of goodness, truth, and love, filling you with goodness, truth, and love, and drawing up your inmost soul and spirit into most holy and blessed and intimate communion, filling you with the consciousness of His love and of love to Him. Oh how ye are enriched in Him ! how in delivering to you this testimony of Christ, our heart is filled with thankfulness on your behalf, that we should be put in trust with such a testimony to deliver to you,

and because we are assured, that that testimony has been confirmed in you by the operation of the Holy Ghost, who hath sealed you unto the day of redemption. And now what lack ye yet? In one sense nothing, nothing to your assurance in the faith. In another sense everything, for all that you have received is but the gage and earnest of that, for which you hope. Filled with the Holy Ghost, you long the more for Him, to whom you are united, but who yet is absent. The Holy Ghost Himself, who unites you to Him, gives you to long for Him the more; wait then for Him, and in the meantime He shall carry on the blessed work, confirming you unto the end, that ye may be found blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Cor. i., 4-8; Matt. xxii., 34.

TO meet the Lord, to be *with* the Lord, to be one with Him, to be *as* He is, to be *where* He is; *this*, and this only, is the *calling* and the *hope* of the church. Letting go this, putting anything else in its place, puts the church into a wrong position, and a weak, impoverished condition. Now, to meet, or even really to *desire* to meet the Lord, the church must be prepared and ready. What the readiness and preparation consists in, or how far it must be extended, or what portion of the church will be ready and prepared, God only knows. It is scarcely possible, nor is it in harmony with scripture

to suppose that the majority will be ready. But that there will be a certain amount of readiness, and a certain portion ready, we may not and cannot doubt. Now this readiness is that of the body, not simply of individuals separate and distinct. Doubtless this readiness, in great measure, consists in putting on those ornaments and graces, which become and denote the bride. “Coming behind in no gift, waiting for the appearing of the Lord,” is the true attitude of a faithful, and dutiful, and obedient church. This is her wealth, her riches, her ornaments; deprived of these she is poor and weak and dishonoured. We cannot but see, how unprepared the church (considered as a whole) is for meeting her Lord, and how little, really and truly, is that meeting expected or desired. What God may work in the hearts of individuals at all times, it belongs not to us to question; but that His appearing is daily, hourly expected by the church, we know is not the case. The Gospel gives us the true explanation of the cause of this condition, and the only remedy. Two features are pointed out: “*love to God*,” and the knowledge of “*the Christ*.” Love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ, are intimately connected. If we love God, we shall long for the time of His glory, and the accomplishment of His will. To love God, and yet be content with this condition, when His name is being dishonoured, is incompatible. “*Hallowed be Thy name*,” “*Thy kingdom come*,” is the first prayer, grounded on our fully, deeply, and simply recognizing God as “*our Father in heaven*.” *Christ*, the *Christ*, is the purpose of

God ; Jesus and His body, the church, is the fulness of God, and to see the manifestation and accomplishment of this purpose, is the desire of those that love God and long for His day. Now God has called us into this fellowship, this communion, this *oneness* of His Son ; we are *one* with Him, and He *one* with us. To suppose that the body should not have or put forth that, which the Head possesses, is the deepest folly and the deepest ingratitude. But let us not forget, that the object of all this, and that only which gives to spiritual gifts their true and real value is, that it is a means unto being prepared for the coming of the Lord. It is not in order that the church may go on counting generation after generation on the earth, but in order to be gathered unto Him. This is our expectation, this is our hope ; let it grow and increase in you. “ The Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God, and the patient waiting for Christ.”

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Eph. iv., 17; Matt. ix., 1-8.

THE Epistle and Gospel for this day, in continuation of the other Epistles and Gospels selected by the church through the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Ghost for the Sundays after Pentecost, set forth and illustrate the work of the Holy Ghost in man under the constitution of the church, that is, in Christ and His church.

No one hath power to forgive sins but God only—God the Father Almighty is the source and origin of forgiveness. The essential principle of sin is the violation of the will of God, which will proceedeth from the Father as the original source—so the forgiveness of sin must proceed from Him as the original source of forgiveness, mercy, and love; and as the will and purpose of God proceedeth forth into manifestation and full accomplishment by His eternal Word, and through the operation of the eternal Spirit of the Father and of the Son, so forgiveness proceedeth forth and reacheth to the sinner by the word, and through the operation of the Holy Ghost. Moreover, whom God forgives, them He heals and saves in body, soul, and spirit. Therefore the Father sent forth His

Son, the Word that was with God in the beginning, and that was God—and He took flesh in the condition into which by sin it had been brought—He was made flesh and tabernacled among us—He died for our sins, and for the sake of His sacrifice for us, and through the propitiation effected by His most precious blood shed for us, God can be just, and yet the justifier of them that believe in Him. Therefore that He may save them to the uttermost, He raised up His Son from the dead, and hath given Him the Holy Ghost, that He may give life to whom He will, even to as many as the Father giveth unto Him—so that they are saved in Him, being partakers of His holiness, and in the end partakers of His glory.

That Jesus healeth diseases and biddeth the sick of the palsy to arise and take up his bed, this of itself doth not absolutely prove that Jesus hath power to forgive sins. But it is by the Holy Ghost, that Jesus healeth the diseases of men—therefore He hath power on earth to forgive sins—because it is by the Holy Ghost, that God hath ordained that sin shall be remitted to the children of men.

Therefore it is, that whosoever is baptized into Christ, he hath in Christ full and complete absolution from all sins, if only He abide steadfast in that grace—for he is baptized into, and made one with Him, who having died for our sins, hath risen into a new creation, wherein dwells holiness and righteousness, whereunto no sin can find access, nor punishment, nor pain, nor death. This is the truth into which our Gospel this day expands, and

this is the theme, on which the apostle dwells in the Epistle.

For, observe, in the verses immediately preceding, the apostle had set forth the mystery of the body of Christ, who having descended first into the lower parts of the earth had ascended, that He might fill all things, and had received gifts for men, and given gifts to men—He had received and sent down the Holy Ghost, and thus the church, His body and fulness had been brought into existence in all the completeness of its several parts—by the mutual operation of which, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, the whole body should be edified in love. Therefore, saith he in the Epistle, I testify to you, that have been new created in Christ Jesus, that ye walk not as those that have never died to the old, and been born into the new creation—as those that have never been engrafted into Christ, nor brought into covenant with God—never been quickened from the death in trespasses and sins. For ye have learned Christ—ye have *heard Him*—Himself in your inner man. *In Him* ye have been taught, that ye put off the old man, from which by His cross He hath freed you, and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, for the spirit of man's mind hath been made new in all those that are in Christ—and ye have been taught to put on the new man, for all those that are in Christ Jesus are a new creation—created according to God in righteousness and true holiness.

Wherefore, dearly beloved, seeing that these things are true of you; seeing that Christ hath said to every

one of you in holy baptism, Thy sins are forgiven thee—seeing that He hath bid you to arise from the palsy of your nature, and to walk in newness of life—seeing that He hath healed your disease, and inspired you with the Spirit of life in Himself, even the life of purity and love unfeigned—put ye away all lying, and speak the truth one with another, for ye are all members of one body. Can the members of one body conceal anything one from the other by falsehood or subterfuge? Give not place to the devil through wrath—for are ye not in Christ? Steal no more—nor keep back from others anything that is due to them. Speak not except to mutual edification, fulfilling in all things the relative duties of the members of one body, ministering health and strength by the Holy Ghost one to the other—ever remembering, that ye are not only regenerated, but sealed by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in you, who rejoices in your joy, but is grieved by all that disturbs and agitates the peace of God, that is in you—by all that is contrary to that spirit of kindness, forgiveness, and love which God hath shown to you and would have you to exercise and manifest one to another.

Eph. iv., 17; Matt. ix., 1-8.

“**G**RIEVE not the Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

This is, as it were, the summing-up of that portion in which the apostle calls on the church to walk worthy of

her vocation. He shows what that vocation is, viz., to be members of one body, with one faith, one hope, one God and Father, one Lord. He shows what the instrumentality and constitution is, by which the body is edified and every member enabled to fill its place, according to the gift and grace bestowed upon it; and lays out in plain and explicit directions the course to be pursued by the members of the same body, the evils to be shunned, the virtues to be cherished, in order that this unity may be preserved in the bond of peace, and in order that the Spirit, by which they are sealed, may not be grieved. Let us notice a few particulars. He reminds them, that they have put off the old man, and have "been renewed," have "put on the new man." He reminds them, or rather states as a fact, that they have been "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Therefore he urges them to put away falsehood, unjust and prolonged anger; to give no place to the devil or accuser, to shut him out; to walk honestly; and diligently to maintain purity, even in speech, in order to minister grace to the edifying of the hearers; concluding with these words, "*Grieve not the Spirit*, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

These are words full of weight and meaning to all, but more especially to those, who have received this *sealing*. On them, more than on any others, rests this responsibility that they "*Grieve not the Spirit*." Indeed, none other can do this to the same extent. They recognize the one body; they acknowledge and receive the ordinances and ministries, which the Lord has insti-

tuted and ordained as channels of grace. They receive the grace of communion and fellowship, recognizing all the members of the one body without distinction of name or sect; they commemorate and have fellowship in spirit with those who sleep in Jesus; they make intercession, enter into the intercession of Jesus, day by day, morning by morning, night by night. They look for, expect, await, the appearing of their Lord, and are daily expecting to be gathered unto Him. They renounce (unless they belie their faith) all hope, all expectation of earthly good or amelioration, they are sealed unto the day of redemption, the day of deliverance. See then, my brethren, ye do not grieve the Spirit, whereby ye are sealed, and observe that this grieving of the Spirit is connected with, and enumerated amongst offences committed against *others*, so intimately is this great truth of *oneness* interwoven with the fulfilment of our place and duty. By the want of truth, by wrath, by impurity, by unedifying conversation, by unjust dealings, by giving admission to the devil, our adversary, by evil speaking, and malice of every kind, by every wrong to others, we grieve the one Spirit, we wound the body of Christ. There can be little doubt that the sealing here referred to is that of which the apostle speaks in the first chapter. "After ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," which was given them, as we read in the 19th of Acts, by the laying on of the apostle's hands. It is to them who are thus sealed that the injunction is given, "Grieve not the Spirit." It is in the body of

Christ the Spirit dwells and can be grieved. When the members of that body separate one from the other, when they contend, when they speak evil of each other, they grieve that Holy Spirit, whereby they are *sealed*. Now what is implied by “sealing.” A thing is sealed to make it sure; and it is sealed to declare whose property it is. They who receive the sealing of the Holy Ghost, receive the badge of belonging unto God. They are sealed to be *kept* until the day of redemption. We have indeed grieved the Holy Spirit—we confess this to God daily—and the body has been weakened by our divisions and sins; but let us remember the word to the impotent man was, “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;” and the same voice said to him, “Rise up and walk.” Truly the Spirit of God is grieved. Truly we do much grieve the Holy Ghost. Let it be our earnest desire for ourselves, and for the whole church, to *Grieve Him no more!*

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Eph. v., 15-21; Matt. xxii., 1-14.

THERE is nothing which wounds the conscience of a reflecting man so acutely, as the remembrance of the continual watchfulness of the Lord to win him to Himself, and of the proud resistance and contempt with which, in the thoughtless years of youth and in maturer age, the overtures of the Lord have been passed by and rejected. No man knows, or can know, until the veil is lifted up and we see even as we are seen, from how many paths of error, from how many acts of sin, our merciful Lord, by His preventing providence, has kept even the worst of men. This is the very essence of the day of grace, that, evil as we are, we should have been infinitely more vile, except for the restraining and preventing grace of God. But can we not perceive how in spite of all, how many times the Lord would have won us to Himself, would have embraced us, and feasted us with the fatness of His house, and we have burst through every barrier, refused to listen to His invitations, and with inconceivable folly and madness, have thrown ourselves away; and except for His infinite love and forbearance, would have thrown ourselves away for ever?

Let no man therefore, in listening to the words of the Gospel for this day, employ himself in the first instance in searching out how many around him, individuals or classes, are guilty of rejecting with indifference, or with scorn, or with cruel persecution of God's witnesses, the message of love, the invitation of grace and bounty, which the good and merciful Lord sends to His creatures; but rather let us be humbled in the dust, in reflecting how we have preferred the occupations or the pleasures of this world, and have morosely put aside the love of our God, and have grieved and well nigh quenched the Holy Ghost. And let us thankfully rejoice in His goodness, who, in spite of the wounds of love rejected and jealousy provoked, keeps us from departing from Him, and still opens to us His inexhaustible treasury.

Brethren, the thought of that unwearied love which, in the history of the church, has borne with centuries of ingratitude,—which, in the history of our individual lives, has borne with all our resistance, forgetfulness of His Gospel, and wilful rebellion,—fills us with wonder, adoration, gratitude and love. What that He should still wait upon His people, and instead of casting them off, should return to them in the fulness of the Holy Ghost, sending to them His apostles, raising up prophets, evangelists, and pastors, sending down, as it were from heaven, the mighty angel with the seal of the living God, to secure them from the fierce day of wrath and tribulation, and to seal them unto the day of redemption! What that after all our individual provo-

cations, He should take us and open our ears, and unscale our eyes, and fill us with the fulness of the Holy Ghost, and satisfy us with His *all* satisfying presence !

Oh how often hath the Lord brought near His kingdom unto the children of men, and they have rejected, and, it is to be feared, will reject Him still. They reject Him because they prefer the kingdom of earth—they do not love the kingdom of heaven. The King hath espoused His Son to a heavenly bride, and His subjects do not like the alliance ; and thus also to every heart the Lord draws near—“ Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me,” —and if we are to accept the invitation we must give up our own frivolities, cease to consider our worldly interests as paramount, sacrifice our interests, our pleasures, our inclinations, if only we may win Christ and be found in Him.

It is no easy matter for any of us, especially for the young, to give up this world, and to choose and to follow the heavenly things. For a short time it may be comparatively easy ; under the influence of a momentary enthusiasm, we may be deceived into the notion that we are giving up ourselves to God ; but this may many times proceed from our being to a greater or less extent under the influence of the wine of this earth. But to walk circumspectly from youth, through manhood to the close, to make the best market of our time, to put out to interest the talents, with which God entrusts us, so that the whole amount, with the full usury, may be yielded up to our Master in the final day of account, to

understand comprehensively and accurately the will of the Lord, and wisely and faithfully to do it—this requires the devotion of a life to be concentrated in every passing moment.

And yet this is what is involved in our acceptance of the invitation of the Lord, and God will work all this in us, if we set ourselves sincerely, heartily, to accept His invitation. It is by the word of the gospel He brings you to His Son ; by the word of His power in the sacraments of the church He grafts you into Christ, and by the full in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost He fills you with His joy, seats you at His banqueting table, and His banner over you is love. Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. So shall your soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and your mouth shall praise Him with joyful lips.

Eph. v., 15-21 ; Matt. xxii., 1-14.

WHATEVER may be the reference made in the Gospel to the condition of the Jewish people and the judgments following on that condition, and however it may in a prophetic aspect point to the events which are yet in store, both as regards the Jewish people and the Christian church, there can be little or no doubt as to the application to be made of it to the present dealings of God with His church, both in regard to those who

accept the invitation addressed to them, and to those who refuse it.

We know that there is an event spoken of, which is called "the marriage of the Lamb," we know that it is said, "blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." "Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." And again, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth, and I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." This is an event, which in the fulness of its reality has not yet been accomplished, however it may be already typically and sacramentally shown out, and however true it is that the church is already called and separated to God, and however true it is that the union which exists between Christ and His church, is now virtually possessed. But the union between Christ and His church can only in its full sense be manifested, when He comes and takes her unto Himself.

Now to come and partake of, to be guests and sharers of this, is the invitation which is sent forth, it would seem, at divers times and by different messengers.

Those to whom it is first given "would not come," others "made light of it," earthly things take the precedence, engross their affections and thoughts, and it is only at last by sending to the highways and hedges, to the streets and lanes of the city, and compelling them, that the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind, good

and bad, were brought in and the house filled, and the wedding furnished with guests..

Now this significantly represents the call given from the beginning to the church, “Come away.” And this reminds us how the call, the invitation has ever been treated and despised by succeeding generations, some “would not come,” some “make light of it.” And why? because they are content not merely with earthly and worldly goods (farm and merchandize, and earthly ties), but likewise with that *earthly* condition of the church, whereby she has taken root on the earth, becomes an earthly habitation, and forgets that she is *heavenly*. Therefore they *would not come*.

But even of those brought in, *all* are not *vested*, all have not on the “*wedding garment*,” which (as is the custom) is provided by the host. All do not enter into the “*joy of their Lord*.” For though “many are called, few are chosen.” It is not enough to have been *called*, it is not enough to have been brought in and made a guest. Something more is needful. The *vestment* must be put on. “The fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.” Christ is our righteousness. And we must put on Christ, and not make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. And look how this is pourtrayed in the Epistle; we are enjoined to *walk circumspectly*, to *redeem the time*, to *understand the will of the Lord*, to *be filled with the Spirit*, to *submit ourselves one to another in the fear of God*. These are the constituent parts and materials of that robe with which they, who receive the *invitation*, must be clad if they will *abide*, if they will

continue. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Brethren, let us make these things realities. We profess to expect our Lord, we *do* expect Him, the voice has been heard, "The Bridegroom cometh," we believe the day is at hand, near at hand, when the dead in Christ shall rise, and when we, who are alive and remain, shall be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air. God has given us the marvellous grace to know and believe that the Lord *is* at hand, we have hearkened to, and received the invitation, "Come unto the marriage," "*Come away.*" Let us see that we are carrying out the realization of our professions. Let us see, that not only we are not hindered by worldly ties, worldly occupations, worldly endearments and pleasures from giving ourselves unto the Lord, but let us see, that we are seeking more and more the preparedness, the meetness, the being *vested*, so that we may not be ashamed at His appearing. Many will be ashamed. They who turn aside will be *ashamed*. They who cannot give up all for Christ will be *ashamed*. They who love the earth and the earthly thing will be *ashamed*. They who have not their "*conversation* (their *citizenship*) in heaven from whence to look for the Lord to change their vile body, like unto His glorious body," these will be *ashamed*.

And now you learn how to walk and please God, *walk circumspectly*, redeem the time, buy every occasion to serve God, for the days are evil. *Understand* (more and more) the *will of God*, grow in grace and the knowledge

of the love of God. Seek to be *filled with the Spirit*, and the joy of the Spirit. Let the melody of the Spirit find expression. Let there be songs in the night, for this is the night, until He, the Day-star, shall arise. The members of Christ's body should be filled with Christ's Spirit. Lastly, "in the *fear of God*," not of man, "submit yourselves one to another." For "ye are members one of another."

The table of the Lord, to which we now draw nigh, is the *foreshowing*, the foretaste, the prelude of the marriage supper of the Lamb; draw near in faith.

Jesus the Lord is *invisibly* present, there we eat bread and drink the cup of salvation, in the anticipation of sitting down in the kingdom. The *reality* will come, and the type and symbol will be done away. Therefore press forward for the mark of the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus. "He says, "Lo, I come," and He says, "Come away, My beloved, My fair one, come away." Let your answer be "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST.

Eph. vi., 10-20; John iv., 46.

“**B**E strong in the *Lord*, and in the power of *His* might.” The apostle does not bid you be strong in your own self, nor in any powerfulness of your own body, of your own reasonable soul, or of your own spirit. Again, therefore, I call upon you to remark the consistency of the apostle’s teaching in his epistles read at this season. You are to be strong in Him, in whom God has engrafted you, and of whose mystical and spiritual body you are living members—of Him who, having died for your sins, abides for ever, very God incarnate, in the life of the resurrection, to be your eternal life. Who has been exalted into the highest heavens—the super-heavenlies—where He sits at the right-hand of God, that where He is, there you may be also. Yea, where He is, there are you in Him by the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in you.

Therefore, saith the apostle in the third verse of this epistle, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed you with all spiritual blessings in the super-heavenlies in Christ.” Well,

then, are you entirely safe? Is the resurrection passed already? Have you got beyond the power of Satan, the liability of temptation, the possibility of apostacy and final ruin, of temporal and of eternal death? Alas, no, by no manner of means. It is no doubt a mystery, and a very fearful mystery, but it is most certain, that in those super-heavenlies, to which you are raised in Christ Jesus, Satan also and his wicked armies, angelic in their nature and creation, ranged under their foul leaders, are to be found. In those super-heavenlies the sons of God encounter the principalities and powers, who bear rule under Satan, those rulers of darkness to whom man, through sin, has betrayed this world; and God's children, blessed by their heavenly Father with every spiritual blessing, in those heavenly places are exposed to and surrounded and infested by the pollution of all spiritual wickednesses. Not that we are to suppose, that Satan and his malignant followers, and the pollution of spiritual wickedness, are able to attain to the presence of God and of His Christ, to gaze upon Him that dwelleth in light inaccessible, to stand up with daring effrontery before Him, to whom every knee must bow. When we read in this place of spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, when in another epistle we read of the necessity that the heavenly things themselves should be purged from uncleanness by the blood of Christ; when we know, that the time is coming when there shall be war in heaven, and Satan and his angels are to be cast out of heaven, we are reminded that God in the beginning created the *heavens* and the

earth—that the heavens He peopled with angelic beings, the earth with creatures formed out of the earth; and that in creating them, He did not bring into existence only a reasonable animal, He created man with a spirit capable of having spiritual communion with Himself, and of being the habitation of Himself by the Holy Ghost. By his body, holding of the earth, earthly; by his spirit, belonging to the heavenly and of spiritual substance, spiritual—allied in substance to angelic spirits and to God Himself. This was the garden, which man betrayed to Satan—not only that garden watered by the river parting into four heads, but that garden from which, redeemed by Christ and in the person of God Incarnate, was to flow the river of the water of life; and in which was to flourish the tree of life, bearing fruit of never-ending life, and whose leaves were to be for the healing of the nations.

And as Satan has defiled his own spiritual nature, and so brought pollution upon the heavenly things, so through man's sin he has been also permitted to defile that which in man was spiritual and heavenly. Man, as born into the world since the fall, is dead in trespasses and sins, and in the dark region of his spiritual being Satan, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, exercises his dominion. And although when we are brought to the holy font, Christ with the finger of God delivers us from that dominion, nevertheless, so long as we are in this flesh, temptable, sinful, and unchanged, Satan and his evil spirits and his spiritual wickednesses still beset

us even in that spiritual and heavenly region, into which we are introduced through the quickening of our spirits by the Holy Ghost in baptism, and through the coming down upon our spirits of the Holy Ghost in sealing. Therefore when the apostle tells us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the power of Satan and his angels in heavenly places, he does not mean, that we have no contest or struggle to carry on with flesh and blood, for we experience daily that we have. But the apostle means, that the special struggle and trial of the Christian begins, when he is holding the fleshly appetites in subjection. It is that which is carried on in the higher and spiritual region. This it is which especially requires the whole armour and panoply of God. Truth, the very truth of God, the whole truth concerning God and His Christ, which by Himself and His apostles He hath revealed. Truth, apprehended in the spirit, must be as a girdle of our loins ; righteousness, God's righteousness in Christ, must be our breastplate : we must be enveloped not only with justice towards man, but with the whole armour of God in saving us by Christ and bringing us into acceptance with Himself—that mystery of Godliness which passes understanding, and can only be apprehended by spiritual faith—faith, that in the fiercest assaults clings to the throne of God and takes refuge in Christ, and there finds and puts on salvation as a helmet to the head. There also we find ready to our hand the sword of the spirit, which is every word of God, word written, word spoken, word ministered ; and, above all, continual prayer and supplication

in the Holy Ghost for all saints and for the apostles of the Lord, that they may bring forth the full message and revelation of the mystery of the Gospel, their mouths opened and their bonds unloosed.

Eph. vi., 10-20; John iv., 46.

THE general tenour of scripture, whether historical or preceptive, goes to prove, that those who are God's chosen people are not called to rest and quietness while passing through this world, but to strife and contention against many adversaries. This truth is especially brought before us in the Epistle of this day, wherein the nature of the adversaries, with which we have to contend, is set before the church—that it is a spiritual conflict, rather than a fleshly one, which she has to maintain.

If the church duly appreciated her true standing and character—that she is a spiritual body, and not of this world—a body joined to Christ, her spiritual Head—taken out of the world to be one with Him—to bear His reproach and to witness for His name and power—she would not be surprised at the nature of the conflict which she has to sustain. It is against Christ, that the devil puts forth all his power. Of this we have proof in the temptations, with which he assaulted our Lord while He dwelt on earth in a fleshly tabernacle, knowing that if he could destroy the Head, the body would cease to exist.

And having failed with the Head, he now puts forth his wicked devices against all who bear the name of Christ. And the more spiritual the members, the more will wicked spirits assail them. He will leave the world and the more fleshly in the church to be destroyed by the flesh, heaping upon them, it may be, the means of all fleshly indulgence, that they may be smothered thereby.

The apostle having laboured to bring up the Ephesian church to her proper standing in Christ, then warns her of the dangers to which she will be exposed. And from this we may learn a practical lesson in doing the work of the Lord in His church, viz., to exhort the pastors, who have the care of God's people, to be especially watchful over those on whom special grace has been newly bestowed, whether it be by ordination to priesthood or ministry, or by imposition of hands upon believers ; seeing that the enemy is then more likely to assault their faith, and to tempt them to say, "Ah, hath the Lord conferred a blessing upon us?"—turning their eyes from faith in the Lord in His ordinances, to be looking at themselves, and judging the Lord by their own experience. The Christian walk is a walk of faith, and not of feeling or sight. Well then may the apostle exhort the church to be "strong in the Lord, and to put on the whole armour of God." To have the *loins* girt about with *truth*. The loin indicates the region of strength, and if the Christian would be strong to resist the falsehood of the father of lies, he should be well instructed in Christian doctrine from the written word of God. He should know the mind of Christ—His purpose

and work in becoming incarnate for the redemption of the world—His covenant of faithfulness with all whom the Father hath given to Him—His power put forth in their behalf, whereby they are enabled to withstand all the fiery darts of the adversary. Standing fast in these truths they are secure. “Having on the breastplate of righteousness;” I take this to apply to the Christian’s walk. The breast is the front presented to all. If a man be not walking righteously, he cannot face an accuser—there is some defect in his breastplate, which his adversary will discover and shoot his arrow through. Unrighteousness in a Christian must make him walk feebly, if he do not fall. “Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace”—“gospel of peace.” “Peace on earth, good-will towards men,” was the angelic announcement at the birth of Christ. This is the substance of the gospel of peace, and every true Christian is bearing the banner of peace towards all men—loving all men—seeking to be a blessing to all. “The shield of faith;” The shield is an armour of defence, standing by faith in Christ Jesus. Putting Him between you and your adversary, his fiery darts will be turned aside, or fall blunted at your feet. “The helmet of salvation” is the Christian hope. He needs to lift up his head with lively hope—hope for the coming of the Lord to give him deliverance from his adversary—and the crown of glory. The Lord hath set before his people a glorious hope. The joy that was set before Him sustained Him to endure the cross. And He would have all His people cherish hope. “The sword of the spirit”

the scripture interprets itself—"which is the word of God." The written word, and it may be also the spoken word, when the faith and love of the people shall give the Spirit liberty. But use diligently the written word; let your minds be stored with it by daily reading therein, and the spirit within you shall bring it to your remembrance in all your times of need. "Praying always"—in secret—in the family—in the church—when you work or walk by the way. Prayer is the expression of your dependence upon God—of your own weakness—it reaches heaven—brings down blessing—and watching unto prayer you will daily have cause to praise. And pray for all those over you in the Lord, and the Lord will bless you by them. Let the readiness of the Lord to hear and answer the cry of a suffering father, as seen in the Gospel, encourage you to go to Him in all your times of trouble, seeking not a sign for yourselves, who should believe without a sign—remember the word to Thomas—but desiring a sign, that those who do not believe may see it and believe. May the Lord bless to you this meditation on His word, and feed you plentifully with His body and blood, now to be spread before you for your nourishment unto eternal life.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Phil. i., 3-11; Matt. xviii., 21.

IF it were asked, what is the principal characteristic of the dispensation in which we live in contrast to the world around us, what is the distinguishing feature of the Christian, what is the guiding rule of his conduct, the answer might be, the characteristic of mercy, the quality of forgiveness, the display of a forgiving spirit. "Put on," says the apostle "as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man hath a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." When the Lord appeared unto Moses, He proclaimed His name: the Lord God merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.—The controversy of the Lord with His people of old, as we read in the prophet Micah, was not that they failed to bring up their sacrifices and offerings, but because they were proud and *unmerciful*. "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams or ten thousands of rivers of oil? He hath showed thee, O

man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" How can the proud, revengeful man walk humbly with God? How can he, who is himself of an unforgiving spirit towards others, appear before God from whom he has received forgiveness. The character of the men of this world is, that they are implacable, unmerciful, and we are by nature hateful and hating one another, and when in this condition He according to His mercy saved us, He saith to each one "shouldst not thou have had compassion on others, as I had pity on thee?"

The attribute of mercy is not reckoned among the virtues, which were held in esteem among the heathen gods and goddesses. It is a Christian virtue, it is the virtue which we have learned to practise, because we ourselves have found mercy and forgiveness at the hands of God. None but a Christian poet could describe mercy in such words as these. "The quality of mercy is not strained, it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven. It is twice blessed, it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes. It becomes the throned monarch better than his crown. The sceptre shows the attribute of majesty, wherein doth sit the fear and dread of kings, but mercy is above this sceptred sway. It is enthroned in the hearts of kings. It is an attribute of God Himself." It was not deemed inconsistent with the dignity and grandeur of a Roman Cæsar, that he appointed games wherein the prisoners were to contend with one another in mortal conflict for the entertainment

of the heathen people. And the gladiators armed for the contest, and as those about to die in this inhuman way, saluted the emperor seated on his throne, by whom these cruel games were appointed ; and this the chief entertainment of one of the most civilised heathen nations was continued long after the mild, merciful, healing gospel of Christ had been proclaimed within the walls of Rome. The gospel of Christ has taught us better things. According to the laws of this our land, in every case in which the sentence of death is awarded, the prerogative of the crown, the right to pardon, is preserved. This is the high attribute of royalty. After the law has taken its course and sentence has been pronounced according to righteousness, the prerogative of mercy still rests in the crown—an instance of the humanizing effects of thos divine precepts, which are embodied in the gospel of Christ. We ascribe glory and dominion to Him, who hath saved us and washed us from our sins in His blood, and we, whom according to His great mercy He hath saved, forgiving our sins, are called to show forth the virtue of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light, and in us, whom He hath made as kings and priests to God and the Father, in us this high attribute of mercy should find its exercise. Peter's question—How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him, until seven times ? may have suggested itself to him from the manner, in which the truth which the disciples proclaimed was received ; it may have been prompted by the opposition, which they met with from their kinsfolk and fellow-countrymen,

by the unworthy return, which they experienced for all their endeavours to enlighten and bring to the knowledge of the truth those who opposed themselves. The answer of the Lord to Peter's question, I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven, is the measure of God's dealing with us. We have found mercy from God, how then can we be unmerciful to others? God has borne our contradictions against Himself, and how shall we allow ourselves any irritation or ill-feeling against others? Our own experience teaches us, that God is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, how can we be less forgiving than God? the rule of the gospel is, not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good. In private life there is room for the exercise of this virtue, of this heavenly grace from day to day. But especially in regard to those who resist or fight against the truth, it is our duty to exercise the patience, the forbearance of God. When the disciples would have called down fire from heaven on the village of the Samaritans, because they would not receive them, our Lord turned and rebuked them, saying, ye know not what spirit ye are of. Let us meditate on this salutary lesson contained in this day's Gospel. Let us learn to show mercy, to exercise a forgiving spirit towards one another, towards our friends and neighbours, towards our enemies, towards all those for whom Christ died, for only then can we pray "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you."

Phil. i., 3-II; Matt. xviii., 21.

IN the Gospel is contained a terrible warning against the unmerciful spirit, the exacting, vindictive, cruel, inexorable spirit which even in the church of God has found its exercise. The Lord speaks to the whole church, when He addresses Peter, the chief of His apostles. Let all beware from the highest to the lowest "So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye *from your hearts* forgive not everyone His brother their trespasses." Fair words are easily spoken, bland countenances easily assumed, the Lord says, "from your hearts."

It is an awful representation, that in the Gospel. A man is forgiven all his sins—his cry for mercy is heard—God is moved with compassion towards him—looses him and forgives him his debt—and after all that man is lost—he is delivered to the tormentors—he must remain in their hands till he pay a debt, which he can never liquidate—the numbers used to state it declaring its infiniteness. The man forgiven is afterwards lost, this is a contingency, a possibility, proclaimed by Christ Himself—made by Him to ring in the ear of the chief of His apostles, of every minister, and of every member in His church. This lost man only stood upon His rights. The debt was due to him. Of course he had a right to make a peremptory demand of payment. He had a right to cast into prison him, who refused settlement of a law-

ful demand. But God had not so dealt with him. God's forgiveness of him had not penetrated his heart and produced in him a desire to follow the example, which had been given to him to copy. "Be followers of God as dear children, and walk in love," had fallen powerless upon his ears. The Lord often warned His followers against knowing the beginnings of religion, and not following on to its final results. He compares the following of Himself to a building that may be begun and not finished, to a warfare that may be enterprized and not carried out to a successful issue. "Many are called, but few are chosen," are His own awful words. No doubt His apostle remembered them, when He said to all the brethren, "make your calling and election sure." But of all the Lord's dividing words none are more searching, than those brought down even unto us (by God's gracious and providential care over His holy scripture) in the Gospel of this day. After receiving God's forgiveness, take heed lest it be of no effect, through your unwillingness to imbibe the spirit and character of Him, who has forgiven you.

But the forgiveness demanded by Christ is a forgiveness asked. The man who owes must at least acknowledge his debt. He who has offended, must say from his heart I have offended, that the offended one may have it in his power to say from his heart, I forgive. Let no one be too proud to ask forgiveness—let no one be too cruel and too implacable not to grant it.

The unforgiving, unrelenting, revengeful spirit may be allowed to show itself on a large scale in the visible

Christian church before the judgment which is coming be executed. A refusal to accept true overtures for reconciliation and unity, to receive and to reciprocate ingenuous acknowledgements of offences and shortcomings and transgressions, may be brought forth as the mark of the church, which God will cast out as reprobate, which will make its boast and say I have never offended, therefore I have no grace to supplicate; those who withstand me are inexcusable, therefore I have no grace to extend. In the present divided state of the church, God in his mercy and wisdom has taken in hand to show where all have been deficient, that each part may have an opportunity to come unto the whole, and to Him who is Head over all, with suitable acknowledgements. The penitent and the merciful shall be approved. The proud who seek not forgiveness, and the pitiless who give not the forgiveness asked for, shall perish together.

If the Gospel shows us, that some whose sins are forgiven may perish everlasting, for all that the Epistle dwells upon the mark from which favourable hopes may be entertained, that they, who have seen the beginning of the religious life, shall also attain to its glorious consummation. The apostle rejoiced to think of the Philippian brethren as of those, concerning whom he was "confident, that He who had begun a good work in them would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." They had in them "the things which accompany salvation." They lived not for themselves. They identified themselves with the work which God

was doing in their day, they stood by the instrumentality which God was employing. "I thank my God," said the holy servant of the Lord from a heart overflowing with gratitude, (for the Epistle shows the grateful spirit which receives favours graciously, as the Gospel the forgiving spirit, which pardons injuries divinely), "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you—for your fellowship *in* the gospel from the first day until now,"—literally, for your fellowship *unto* the gospel from first to last—for your hearty endeavours to make it known—to pass unto others the cup of salvation, which He who blessed it, bade you circulate. This you did for the gospel of Christ, you did not stop it—chain it—bury it—but you gave it free course—you helped it forward unto the accomplishment of its mission. And for myself, the minister of it, I can truly say that "I have you in my heart," and with good reason, for "in my bonds," for the truth's sake, "in my defence and confirmation of the Gospel" you helped me one and all. They lived for the prosperity of the whole church, and for the free, unfettered, full, and successful operation of all the means ordained for its blessing and perfection. In last week's Epistle, after the detail of the Christian panoply, when the church has been pressed into the fullest endowment of life and power which it can receive from its Head in any generation, the main use to which it should be applied is lastly enforced—"pray for all saints, and *for me*, that utterance may be given unto me." Pray *concerning* all saints—pray *in behalf of* me. When you pray, be not occupied about yourselves exclusively, but be thinking of all the saints—all, from the

beginning to the end—all whom the King of saints waiteth for to complete the glorious company, over whom and by whom He shall reign in the kingdom of God—and if you desire the saints to be gathered and perfected, then intercede on behalf of those, by whom God would do that work. The Philippians were taught of God in these two matters — therefore had the apostle hope concerning them. Therefore could he pray for them with hope, that they might ever have the knowledge, feeling, and true discernment which belong to love, that they might always stand by and maintain the right, and that at the day and in prospect of the day of Christ, they might be those who could be looked at in sunlight, as those who were true and genuine, as those therefore without offence, taking no offence at Christ in any of His offices, or in any part of His work, and giving no offence, causing none to misunderstand and reject Christianity through their misrepresentations of it. Let us strive to learn what is taught us in the Gospel and Epistle of the day, that we may be counted worthy to be seen amongst those who have gone before us, even amongst those who are filled with the fruits of righteousness, which bring praise and glory unto God, which Christ alone worketh, and in those only, who abide in Him, who eat His flesh and drink His blood, who live by Him as He lived by God.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Phil. iii., 17; Matt. xxii., 15-22.

THEY thought to entangle Him in His talk. The religious professors joined themselves with the liberal politicians—for the most part sceptics—and after consultation, sent to Him (as Luke tells us) their spies, feigning themselves to be just men, while they themselves kept in the background, prompting their creatures and watching their advantage. They thought to entangle Him, for they supposed that His heart, like theirs, was fixed on earthly power. They knew not, that His kingdom was from above, and that what He looked forward to on earth was self-sacrifice, even death, the shameful death of crucifixion, the destruction of all human pride and glory. They thought that if He acknowledged Cæsar's right, He would abdicate His own; and that if He denied it, the Herodians in Cæsar's name would readily dispose of Him. Vain was their conspiracy; He threw aside their crafty questions as the new withs fell from the arms and feet of Sampson. You accept Cæsar's protection, you avail yourselves of Cæsar's currency—render back to him his stipulated tribute. You

live under him as prince—render unto him his due. Your own Rabbis will tell you, that if you avail yourselves of the king's coin, you acknowledge him to be your lord.

Such was the immediate answer, which our Lord gave to the question propounded to Him; but He added another word—Render unto God the things which are God's, restore unto Him *His* due—as though He would say—Were you not His peculiar people? Was *He* not your King? Did you not ask a king, that you might be like the nations around you? Did you not reject the Lord from being your King? Him whom God your Father would send unto you, whose name should be called Shiloh, sent of God, unto whom the gathering of the people should be. Now therefore at length return, render unto God yourselves, for you are His; receive Him, whom the Father hath sent, who would gather you even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings—would raise you up above the earthly things, on which your hearts are set, and make you heirs with Him of the heavenly inheritance.

Surely, brethren, all this is contained in those words, “render unto God the things that are God's.” Surely they are words of deep import and wide application. They speak to the conscience of all men; of Jews, of Gentiles, and especially of Christian men.

To all men God saith, Where is the image impressed upon you, when you were brought into being? You were created in the image of God, that you might be God's vicegerent, conveying His blessings and com-

municating His goodness to all creatures upon earth. To God you have denied yourselves ; to the creation you have brought misery and woe. The very ground for your sakes is cursed, and brings forth thorns and briars. You have forfeited all right and title to earth, and yet you cleave to it ; you have abdicated your right of dominion under God, you seek to subdue it for yourself, and for your own aggrandizement and pleasure. Return unto Me, saith your God, for I have redeemed you ; ye are not your own, you are bought with a price, redeemed from your vain conversation and from the course of this world, which passeth away ; redeemed not with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of the spotless Lamb, who was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but now, in these last times, hath been manifested for you who believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory. Render unto God the things that are God's. Such are the words of Jesus, addressed to you in the Gospel ; nor in the Epistle is the apostle's theme dissimilar.

The chief duty God imposes on His apostles is, that they seek to lead His people away from the earthly things, and guide and conduct them into the heavenly kingdom. Such was the mission of the apostles to the circumcision, but they of the circumcision, as a nation, refused the call ; they sought the earthly, they perished as a nation with the earthly ; they shall be restored and raised, as it were, from the dead, and the earthly shall be restored with them, only when the heavens shall rule. Again, God called the apostle Paul, and sent him to the

Gentiles, that among them he might gather out a people to *His glory*. But as the Jews after the captivity in Babylon were zealous for the law and for the name of God, but not according to knowledge, and refused the heavenly kingdom, so also the nations, to whom Paul was sent, have professed the name of Christ and have been zealous, even to blood, for the propagation of the Christian name over the whole earth, but they also, to this day, reject the hope of the heavenly kingdom. Therefore, now in the end of days, the Lord again sends apostles, whose special work it is to prepare His people for the kingdom, and to lead them in. As good shepherds, they should go before the sheep—the sheep should follow them. Their word to the baptized is, Be imitators of us, follow us onward into the kingdom. Forsake the earthly things, forsake the worldly idols, of which the church is full. Forsake these, for the time hasteth, and the idle shepherd riseth up, and the end of him and his followers is destruction. And behold the Lord—the King—your King, with whom ye are to be kings and priests, behold ! He cometh quickly, and His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He cometh to administer an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom, of which you are already denizens and heirs expectant. Therefore look we for the Lord from heaven.

Phil. iii., 17; Matt. xxii., 15-22.

IN the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ; the things invisible to eye of sense, and the things visible, of which the senses of man are adapted to take cognizance ; the things spiritual and the things material. All intelligent apprehension or intelligent belief concerning God and angels, and spiritual beings and spiritual things, is based upon our holding fast the distinction between these two. In man, as you know, there is a combination or union of the two. He is not mere matter, nor is he merely an intelligent animal ; but he consists of a reasonable soul as well as flesh, or, in other words, of spirit, soul, and body. These were so constituted in his creation, that we are told " he was made a living soul." Paul, after repeating these words from the book of Genesis, adds that he is of the earth, earthy. And we know, that he was placed upon the earth that he might subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth.

Almighty God, who created us, who knoweth all things from the beginning, hath from all eternity purposed to send His Son into the world ; in due time He came down from heaven to earth, out of the invisible into the visible. He was born in our flesh, that He might redeem us from our sins, and redeem both us and the earth and all creation from all curse and evil and

possibility of future fall. He paid the ransom for us of His own most precious sufferings and death, and thus He laid the foundation for the future blessedness of all creation by exalting our nature into the heavenly, changing it from being of the earth—earthy—to be spiritual and heavenly. This change has been already fulfilled in Himself. He has taken His body, which was by natural birth earthy and mortal, from the grave, and He is raised in glory and immortality in a body spiritual and incorruptible and heavenly. The Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, has become not only a citizen, but King and Lord of the heavenly kingdom. His conversation or citizenship is in heaven. His body is now a body of glory, so much is implied in the Epistle; and having, according to the eternal promise and purpose of God, received the Holy Ghost into His renewed nature, He has sent down the Holy Ghost upon those who believe in Him, baptizing them into His death upon the cross, by that cross crucifying the flesh, that is, the old nature which we have received from Adam downwards in our natural birth, and regenerating us, bringing us to a new and heavenly birth in our spirits by the Holy Ghost. We are born from above of water and of the Spirit. Thus He hath given us to live the new life in our spirits, a life which is hid with Him in God, and which is supplied to us as members of one mystical body in Him. Further, we are made to taste and drink of the heavenly gift, partaking of the Holy Ghost and the powers of the world to come—of the powers of that heavenly world or kingdom which is to come.

Therefore, dearly beloved, although still in our mortal bodies, bodies of the earth—earthy—walking on this earth, in the midst of this world with all our worldly duties to fulfil, yet we are born again in our spirits from heaven, and our citizenship is in heaven. Is it possible that our minds should be fixed on the things of this earth? Is it possible, that we can be enemies of that Cross, by which we have undergone that most sweet and precious suffering, dying to the flesh, as the door to this heavenly life? It is indeed suffering, crucifixion of all our cherished pleasures and ambitions and the hopes and joys, which centre in this world and are limited to this world, but sweet and precious to the souls of them that know God, and love God, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, and who expand in the enlarging power of the Holy Ghost into the anticipations of heaven and its society. The communion with God and with His most dear and loving Son, communion in the Holy Ghost; the society of all blessed angels and spirits made perfect, and all the hopes of that consummation and bliss which are surely to be ours, if only we remain faithful to our Lord. Oh, lift up your hearts above the things of earth, above these clouds and mists and oppressions which crowd upon its surface. Be ye lifted up into the heavenlies, O ye that have been quickened from the death of sin through the cross of Christ, and raised, through the power of His resurrection working in you, to sit with Him in heavenly places. Rise up above the rivalries and controversies and disputings and wars and fightings of this world. It

is sometimes a hard struggle, but let it be accomplished. Fulfil your duties here; give honour where honour is due; give tribute to whom tribute is due; every relative duty here loyally fulfil. Your body is yet upon the earth. Ye are subject to all the ordinances of man for the Lord's sake, who hath redeemed them all, and will bring them out of the darkness of this present age into the light of the New Jerusalem in the age to come. But never forget that there, in the New Jerusalem, is your home. There ye are seated by the side of your most loving Lord. He waits and you wait, when not only in spirit, but in body also ye may be wholly His. Therefore our longing eyes look upward into the heavens. We watch for them to open and to disclose the glorious vision of the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, for He shall come, and by the same mighty working whereby we know that He is now subduing all unto Himself, He shall change these bodies of earth and humiliation into the fashion and likeness of His body and glory.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Col. i., 3-12; Matt. ix., 18-26.

LET your faith, hope, and trust be in God—the same yesterday, *to-day*, and for ever.

We are too prone to read the scriptures as containing a record of *past* things in which we rejoice, and for which we are ready to give glory to God ; but as of a time that has passed away, and in which we have no present interest. This is, in fact, denying the above truth, that God is the same yesterday, *to-day*, and for ever ; and so our faith in a *present* God, willing and ready to respond to our faith in Him, is not called forth.

This “certain ruler,” spoken of in the Gospel, puts us sadly to shame. He came and worshipped Jesus, saying, “ My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay Thy hand upon her and she shall live.” Jesus was ready to answer the call of faith. “ He rose up and followed him.” When He came to the ruler’s house, He found them expressing their sorrow over the deceased maiden, as they were wont (See 2 Chron. xxxv., 25). Jesus put them aside, saying, “ The maid is not dead, but *sleepeth*. And He went in and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.”

We are not to infer but that death had passed upon the maiden in the sense in which we ordinarily apply the term, and that but for the interposition of divine power she would have so remained until the resurrection; but it suggests to us reflection on the condition of those who depart this life, calculated to mitigate our grief with some such feeling, that we put to rest for the night a sick or weak member of our family, trusting that such will sleep in comfort and awake in the morning refreshed. Death is not so fearful a thing as the enemy would make us believe. It is *sleep*, and we know that in sleep the Holy Spirit has access to our spirits, comforting and refreshing, and even kindling hope. Think of the patriarch Jacob, whose history suggests that verse in one of your hymns—

Though, like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness comes over me,
My rest a stone :
Yet in my dreams I'll be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee !

He *saw* in his dream a ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending thereon, and *heard* precious promises, and among them the assurance of God, “I am with thee.”

We have good warrant to believe, that all our brethren who die, or rather *sleep*, are nourished in that sleep by the divine presence—“Absent from the body, present

with the Lord"—and are growing with the body of Christ, His church, unto the perfection which they shall attain at the first resurrection. The maid arose at the call or the stretching out of the hand of Jesus. At His call our sleeping brethren shall awake; and we who are abiding in hope shall be caught up with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so be ever with Him. Oh, for a living faith in a living God—"the same yesterday, *to-day*, and for ever." Our subject, calling for the exercise of faith in a *living* Lord, is further strengthened by that other fact recorded in the Gospel, of the woman diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, touching the hem of His garment, and being made whole. It requires neither the hand nor the voice of Jesus to obtain His blessing. It is *faith* that brings it forth. The *hand* and the *voice* are both *good*. His ministers are warranted to use them both; and His people should regard them as the hem of His garment reaching from heaven to earth, and receive them in the assurance of faith, that His blessing will come forth through them. Our walk is a walk of *faith*, and if we would that the Lord should be honoured in His church, that His power and grace should be seen in her, her prayer should be strong and unceasing—"Lord, increase our faith."

The strain of the Epistle is the rendering thanks to God for what He had wrought in the hearts of the Colossian church. The apostle commends their faith and love, and especially for their having embraced the hope of that, which is laid up for them in heaven; and

finally giving thanks to the Father, who had made them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. This harmonizes with what we have said above. It recognizes our oneness with all the saints who have gone before, with whom we are to partake of the inheritance—with whom we have now communion, and who are one with us in the same *hope*. Let us seek to abide in it day by day, walking in the way that leads to glory, fruitful in every good work, increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened by His power unto patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. These are the ways that lead to the end—a daily progress in the spiritual life—so that whatever change awaiteth us, we may be found ready.

Col. i., 3-12; Matt. ix., 18-26.

“ **W**E give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven.”

One great feature that distinguishes the apostolical epistles, and especially those of Paul, is that spirit of thankfulness which pervades all the inspired writings addressed to the churches of the saints. All the epistles to the churches, with only two exceptions, commence with an act of thanksgiving or blessing, for the grace of God to the churches, and for the hope set before them. This is the true eucharist, the offering of thanks

to God. "In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you." "Giving thanks always for all things to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful." But this spirit of thankfulness especially becomes those, to whom the care of the churches is committed. They are bound to give thanks, they are bound to recognize the exceeding grace of God towards those, who are the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God, for "whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren, and whom He did predestinate, them He also called." This, then, is the true ground of our thanksgiving, that God hath chosen, predestinated, called us to be conformed to the image of His Son—that *He* hath done it, not according to our deserving, not according to any works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

It requires no small measure of faith on the part of the rulers, to look upon the congregations of God's people, the baptized, in the present state of Christendom, and realize that they are the holy ones, the saints, the chosen ones of God, predestinated before the foundation of the world to be partakers of the glory of the heavenly kingdom. And yet, in reading the epistles of Paul, we see how steadily

he kept this in view, how earnestly he impressed upon the churches, this their standing in the sight of God. How fully he himself realized it, and directed his whole energies to awaken and keep alive among the churches the same faith, openly expressing his conviction of the divine mission, which he himself had received for their sakes. Ye are our epistle, he says to the Corinthians, the epistle of Christ, written with the Spirit of the living God ; and such trust have we through Christ to God-ward, not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament—not of the letter, but of the Spirit. This was the confidence of the apostle to the Gentiles, that those to whom he wrote were God's elect—His chosen ones—and that he was made of God for their sakes an able minister of the Spirit, whereby they and he together, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, should be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. The expression used by the apostle in enforcing this truth upon the different congregations varied, but the thing enforced is the same on all occasions, and the thing thus enforced is, that God's purpose towards us is our being perfected in Christ, our being presented holy and unblameable, and unreprovable, in His sight ; that which is wanted on our part being, that we continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which is Christ in you—the hope of glory. Paul's prayer to God, as we read in the Epistle for the

day, is, that the Colossians may be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, increasing in knowledge, strengthened with might, according to His glorious power, giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Paul's boast, in the prospect of his departing, of his being offered up, of his ceasing from his ministrations among the churches,—was, that he had not shunned to declare to them the whole pardon of God; and this should be our confidence and our boast, that whether we continue or be taken away, we have kept back nothing that was profitable, that we have given the full measure, that we have not dealt with false weights, false balances, but have declared in word, and ministered in act, the full measure whereby the saints may be perfected. This is the responsibility of the ministers of God, to declare the purpose of God, the calling and election; and the responsibility of the people is to make their calling and election sure, to continue in the faith, and to hold fast the hope, and to abound in thanksgiving.

Now, beloved, see that ye abound in thanksgiving. Let your eucharist be, not a mere repetition of a form, but a real act of thanksgiving and praise and blessing to God; a flowing forth of spiritual joy, and pouring out of the heart before Him, who hath made us meet to be inheritors with the saints in light, inheritors of glory, heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, for

all the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him amen to the glory of God by us. God is not honoured on our part by a voluntary humility, by an abdication of our dignity, or denial of our standing. He who is our Head, is seated on the throne of the Father, and the body cleaving to Him, the Head, and ministering the grace which comes from Him upon the members of His body, increaseth with the increase of God. This rejoicing, hopeful, thankful spirit, is the right spirit in which to approach to the altar of God ; and in so doing we shall fulfil our duty, and receive our reward, according to the words, “ Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High. Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, I will show the salvation of God.”

SUNDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF ALL SAINTS.

I Thes., iv., 13, to v., 10; Matt., xxv., 31.

THIS year we have the privilege of observing the octave of the feast of All Saints. To-day is the Sunday within the octave, and the Epistle and Gospel direct our attention to this most blessed solemnity. It is a period which commences with humiliation, and earnest and special confession of sin, the sins of the baptized people of the Lord, and then, having received the word of absolution, which God and His Christ have spoken to us by His ministers, our hearts are enlarged to offer prayers and supplications for all saints, and thanksgiving on their behalf. We pray for God's ancient people, and the fulfilment of the promises to them; we commemorate the saints departed and so we are brought to the altar of God, and we rejoice in that most blessed communion which we have with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ in the Holy Ghost, the communion of all saints; nor do we forget to commemorate the blessed angels. During this season doubts and fears for weak and failing brethren are put away. Regrets and sorrows for those who are gone, are not allowed to arise and cast their shade of gloom over

the brightness of our joy. Our thoughts are directed to the great work of salvation, which God has wrought for us, and for all His saints in Christ Jesus our Lord, and to the never ending development of that work in ever augmenting glory and blessedness in them that are Christ's. We think of the ramifications of the work of Christ through all creation. On earth the bringing back to God of His chosen people, the seed of Abraham His friend, and the blessing that is to be brought to all nations in the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham. In heaven the joy that has been brought to the blessed and elect angels through the exaltation of Christ our God, God Incarnate in the creature nature of man; joy, because they love God and love us men, and rejoice in the fulfilment of His purposes; joy, because through the God-man, God in creature nature, stability and strength have come to all blessed angels and spiritual beings and to all creation; joy both to angels and to the spirits of the just made perfect, because through the Incarnation of the Word, the bride of the second Adam is being formed of His flesh and of His bones, and when she is ready the marriage of the Lamb shall be celebrated, the great event, from which shall issue forth that glorious eternity which is before us.

Why is it that the communion of all saints suggests to us all these various topics? Why is it that our joy in this communion excludes the thought of all that is frail and feeble and failing; the thought of sorrow, care, and anxiety, the thought of sickness and of death? Why is the heart buoyed up with joyful hope and

expectation, and travels onwards on the course of God's future purposes, looking forward to the eternal blessedness of the church, and of all blessed spirits, and of all the saved multitude of men, to the prospective vision of all creation redeemed from sin and misery, renewed in an everlasting spring of life and incorruption, and refreshed for ever with the waters of life flowing from the throne of God? Why are we led into this train of thought? Because the communion of all saints is the communion of the eternal Spirit of God, evermore proceeding from the Father, the Spirit of the Father and of the Son, the Spirit who is evermore given to Him, that was the Only-begotten from all eternity, born in time of the blessed virgin, born again from the dead and who dieth no more, the well beloved Son of the Father, Jesus Christ our Lord. Because Christ evermore imparts that same Spirit unto His saints, the members of His body—the life-giving Spirit, the Comforter, and He dwells in us all who are born again of God in Christ. *This is the communion of the saints.* The Spirit of all sanctity and purity, the Spirit of all love and joy, the Spirit of all grace and power, the Spirit that works in us with the mighty energy, with which He wrought in Christ in raising Him from the dead, the Spirit that puts away *all* death, that works in us to love and fear God with all our hearts, to obey Him with all our powers, that is secretly and noiselessly but most certainly conforming the inner man to the image of Jesus, and preparing not only those who are labouring on earth, but preparing and carrying onward the spirits of them that have gone before, one

work, one most certain work in all and each, the Spirit of Him that is the resurrection and life, so that they that are in Christ, in whom this blessed Spirit works can never die, they live in Jesus, and He lives in them. We wait therefore for the coming of the Lord; we wait to be raised up from earth to heaven, we long to put off the mortal, or rather to be clothed upon with the heavenly and immortal. God our Father waits for it, Jesus our Saviour and our Lord waits for it; the blessed spirits as they rest in Jesus are strangely moved with anticipations of the moment, when the trumpet shall sound and they shall wake up in the heavenly clothing of bodies of glory. The blessed angels wait for the time, all creation waits, for then shall that work of the Holy Ghost, wrought in our blessed Lord be carried out in them that are Christ's, at His coming, and so shall the way be opened for the bringing about of that end of all things, when God shall be all in all, and all things shall be created anew in Christ by the Spirit that dwelleth in Him. Therefore is it that the Spirit saith, Come, and the bride and all that have ears to hear say, Come Lord Jesus.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

Rom. xiii., 1; Matt. viii., 23.

IT is very remarkable that the exhortation to obedience to the state as the higher powers, should be contained in the epistle to the Romans rather than in any other epistle of Paul. Alas! in this doctrine as in the peculiarities of the gospel committed to Paul and preached by him, and likewise in the relation which Paul held, as the founder of it, the Roman church has determinately set Paul aside, and virtually rejected him. Nor is it less remarkable seeing that the church of Rome boasts especially of Peter's doctrine, that Peter should have inserted the same injunction nearly in the same words in his general epistle—his *general* epistle, for to the Romans so far as we know he never wrote. Paul wrote to *them*, not Peter.

Honour thy father and thy mother, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake, not only because thou art under their power and dependent on them, but whether dependent or not. This is enshrined among the universal commandments of God to His creatures of mankind. It is the first commandment with promise, it is the first which concerns our duty to our neigh-

bours, and this command is the root and origin of God's command to obey our rulers, for civil society is but the aggregation of families, the family expanding into the tribe and nation, and in giving to us the gospel of the kingdom, in sending down upon us the Holy Ghost, assuming us into His own spiritual body, Christ, although He be the lawful King and the Father of the age to come, renews again to us the original command, and shows that, as the Holy Ghost coming down upon us sanctifies us to be the Lord's, so by the same Holy Ghost flowing forth from the church and penetrating all the relations of life—our duties to the family and to civil society, our relation one towards another, and towards all men—are, in like manner, confirmed and sanctified.

But while we are taught, that the powers that be are ordained of God, and that faithful rulers may expect the grace of God's Holy Spirit giving them wisdom and strength, we must guard against the notion that rulers even though Christian, are ministers of Christ. They are ordinances of God, ministers of God, not ministers of Christ or channels of the Holy Ghost. It is a very serious error and founded upon ignorance or forgetfulness of the hope of the gospel, that gospel revealed to and preached by Paul, to suppose that as Christ fulfils His priestly functions by the church, so He fulfils His kingly functions by the state, so that in a Christian state, Christ's kingdom is already come; whereas Christ exercises His kingly functions by the Holy Ghost equally with His functions of High Priest,

and in His kingdom we are all both kings and priests, nor is the priesthood more the channel of grace than is the kingship. And even now, although the kingdom is not revealed but is within us, is in the mystery, we are as much kings as we are priests. It is true that we exercise both one and the other of these classes of functions in the Holy Ghost, and after a spiritual manner in the heavenly places, and all that you *see* or hear on earth, all that is visible and tangible and audible, all the external machinery of government, all the ministrations of word and of sacraments, are but the very images of the heavenly things the shadows, but not the realities, which though indeed we enjoy so far as our condition in this mortal flesh permits us, yet are beyond both our senses and our understanding.

Oh me, Jesus reigns not yet. Not yet are the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Not yet is He revealed as King, holding the very elements of nature in His power, restraining the winds midway in their frantic burst, bidding the raging sea be still, and diffusing universal righteousness and peace, peace which shall overflow like a river, pervading the hearts of all men. Not yet is He come, to whom not only men and angels, but even the very devils shall yield obedience. Not yet hath arrived the time when Satan and his angels shall be expelled from the inheritance of the Lord, not only cast out from heaven, but even for a time from earth, and shall be chained up in that dreaded bottomless pit, bound and imprisoned under seal until the appointed time of the

kingdom upon earth shall have expired. Then for a little season Satan must be loosed, that by his last acts of pride and wickedness he may prepare himself for his final doom. Meantime, the anointed King, although enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high, on earth is still rejected. No sooner does He put forth His power, than straightway those who hear of it beseech Him that He will depart out of their coasts. What though He be present to deliver His redeemed from the possession of the evil spirits, yet because in this fallen world it involves the loss of their swine, they prefer to be left alone.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath prepared our hearts to welcome His Son, our King who hath moved in our hearts to shout with joy, Hosanna to the Son of David ! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that sendeth His messenger before His face to prepare His way before Him. Blessed is He that re-buildeth His twelvefold altar, and prepareth the sacrifice of eucharist, and gives to us the true bread, the unleavened bread, the bread that cometh down from heaven, even His own most holy flesh, and His own life-giving blood. Approach then to our Lord, our King, and offer to Him the sacrifice of righteousness to God our Father, and receive from Him the heavenly food, the bread and wine of immortality.

SUNDAY BEFORE ADVENT.

Jer. xxiii., 5-8 ; John vi., 5-14.

WHEN the Jews had witnessed the miracle of feeding the multitude with the five barley loaves and two small fishes, they said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world ;" and they determined to come and take Him by force and make Him a king ; but He withdrew Himself. At the close of His public ministry, just before He was offered up, when the time was come that that prophecy of Zechariah should be fulfilled—"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, thy King cometh unto thee," Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and the whole multitude greeted Him as their king, saying, 'Hosanna, blessed is the king of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And when He appeared before Pilate, the Roman governor put the question to Him—"Art thou *the king of the Jews?*" And when the last act was consummated, and He was nailed to the cross, the inscription in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, was, "Jesus of Nazareth, *the king of the Jews.*"

The portion of scripture selected for the Sunday before Advent refers to this the purpose of God with His Christ, announcing, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice on the earth. And this is the name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." The expectation of the Jews at the time of the first advent of our Lord was that the Messiah was about to appear, and that His appearance would be the inauguration of that kingdom of peace and prosperity, which was promised to the Son of David. They looked for their promised king, and for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. Their king had indeed come, but not in the form in which they had expected Him. No visible glory surrounded Him; no armed hosts waited on Him. He dwelt not in palaces. He feasted not upon royal dainties. He had not where to lay His head, and yet He was indeed a king, with all the prerogatives of royalty. What earthly king ever said to the winds, "be still"—to the sea, "thus far shalt thou come, and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed"? What earthly king could command the water that it be made wine? What earthly king could feed the multitude with bread in the wilderness? What earthly king could say to the dead, "arise"? The winds and the sea obeyed Him, the devils trembled at His word, diseases and death fled at His presence, health and life waited on His word. When He fed the multitude, the people said, This is of a truth that "coming one," the prophet of the

Lord, He is our king. He is the Messiah. Let us lift Him up and bring Him into our holy city, and all our troubles will be at an end. Our enemies will no longer trample us under their feet. He will fight for us. He will save us. Hosanna! save now, Lord, send us now prosperity.

Such were the thoughts of the hearts of the people at witnessing the works of the Son of Joseph. A chord had been touched which vibrated in every heart. The dormant hope had been aroused by the feeding of the multitude. It was again quenched and smothered for a season, for "His time was not yet come." And He withdrew Himself. But it burst forth afresh with all the more enthusiasm at the last, when before that last pass-over He entered into Jerusalem, and the whole multitude cried out, Hosanna! blessed be the king of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The Epistle and Gospel, which have been read in our ears, ought to awaken in us similar thoughts—to excite in us similar longings. Till Christ comes as King, the purpose of God remains unfulfilled—the desire of the heart of God remains unsatisfied. The people are starving for lack of that bread from heaven, which He alone can supply them with. The whole earth is in disorder and confusion for want of that righteous government, which shall be exercised when the Lord is revealed as King of kings. Death triumphs still in spite of the victory which through death He has achieved for us over death, until His second appearing. How intense should be our longings for Him to come in His kingdom. "O

Lord, raise up Thy power and come among us, and with great might succour us," should be our daily cry. The words of the prophet read for the Epistle should awaken the desire in our hearts. The record of our Lord's acting in the commencement of His ministry should strengthen that desire. But this is not all. He is the *desire of all nations*. There should be one universal longing and cry for His coming, whose name is the Lord our righteousness. The burden is felt by all. The tyranny and oppression on the one hand, the lawlessness and rebellion on the other, testify to the absence of Him, the King, who shall reign and prosper and execute judgment and justice on the earth—who alone can make the groaning of the creation to cease. All the earth feels the burden; but how shall they learn to know, where the remedy is to be found? Only by our testifying, not in word only, but in act. Go ye forth, ye messengers of the King. Proclaim that the kingdom of heaven is at hand—heal the sick—open the eyes of the blind—cause the lame to walk—feed the hungry—deliver those who are bound in the snares of the devil. Freely ye have received, freely give. Thus proclaim Him "the King of Israel," who cometh in the name of the Lord. Stir up the Jews to jealousy, that the universal cry may go up, "Come, Lord Jesus"—that the heathen may rejoice with the chosen people of God—and the ends of the earth may behold the salvation of the Lord.

Jeremiah xxiii., 5-8; John vi., 5-14.

AT this season, we turn our thoughts to the subject of "Advent." The church seeks to prepare our minds and our spirits for the celebration of Christmas day, and this subject we should seek, as much as possible, to have before us. The portion appointed for the Epistle instructs us of the coming of the Lord, of Him who is the righteous *Branch*—the *King*—and the *Lord* our righteousness.

The Gospel records one of His acts, who is thus spoken of in the Epistle; by which act he miraculously and *marvellously* and *abundantly* supplied the wants of is the famishing multitude, so that they cried out, "This is of a truth that Prophet that should come into the world." The act recorded in the Gospel is a development and illustration of that which is foretold. When Jesus the Lord appeared on earth, and wrought this miracle, then was in part fulfilled or shown forth to Israel after the flesh, the fact that *He* had come, who was "the righteous Branch"—the "King"—the "Lord our righteousness." The wise in heart recognized His footsteps, the true sheep of the house of Israel recognized His voice and followed Him. This same Jesus will come again, and we shall see Him. When He comes again, then the words in the Epistle shall receive their *full* development and meaning—then the Gospel narra-

tive will be exhibited in all its spiritual realization and interest.

There are, then, two points brought before our notice, in reference to the advent of our Lord, in regard to its two-fold parts—the first and the second advent. These are *deliverance* and *provision*—*deliverance* from dispersion, separation and thraldom, *supply* of our want and necessity even to abundance.

Israel after the flesh (the Jews) rejected Him at His first advent, and their deliverance awaits His second. Though He fed them with bread in the wilderness, they refused the true bread that cometh down from heaven. Nevertheless His first coming brought deliverance and supply. The spiritual seed, Israel after the spirit—the election—has attained deliverance and abundant supply.

We have even now received deliverance from this present evil world; we have been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, though it be as yet invisible, yet in a mystery. We have been delivered from our sins—the Son, the Branch, the King has made us free. Be not entangled with the chains and fetters from which we are delivered. We are fed with heavenly food—with the bread that cometh down from heaven—with the very flesh and blood of the Son of man. Yet we see Him not. The eye of flesh can see but bread and wine.

The advent of our Lord has brought us deliverance, has brought us an abundant supply of heavenly food, but it is in part. That which is perfect is not come, and cannot be until He comes. Then salvation, His salva-

tion, will be revealed in its reality, in its fulness. Then the body of sin and humiliation will be put aside for ever. Then we shall sit down and eat with Him in His kingdom—shall eat of the tree of life. Then deliverance and eternal blessedness shall go forth unto the ends of creation. Let your thoughts, let your affections go forth unto Him that has come and will come; *has* blessed us and *will* bless us; *has* delivered and *will* deliver; feeds us now at His table, by-and-bye in His kingdom.

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